



Quizzes for the concorso docenti:

B2 English

Chiara Bruzzano, PhD

Languag Ed

Today's lesson

- 35 multiple choice quiz questions on B2 English
- Trainer: Chiara Bruzzano
- Video recording available on LanguagEd's YouTube channel

The screenshot shows the YouTube channel page for LanguagEd. The channel name is "LanguagEd" with the handle "@languaged", 3.62K subscribers, and 30 videos. The channel description states: "LanguagEd is a group of language education researchers, teachers and designers. We crea...". Below the description are links to "languaged.org" and "1 more link". There are buttons for "Customize channel" and "Manage videos". The video player shows a video titled "Language teaching methods: a timeline" with 91,669 views, posted 3 years ago. The video description starts with "This video lesson summarizes the main language teaching...". The left sidebar shows navigation options: Home, Shorts, Subscriptions, Your channel (selected), History, Your videos, Watch later, Your clips, and Show more.

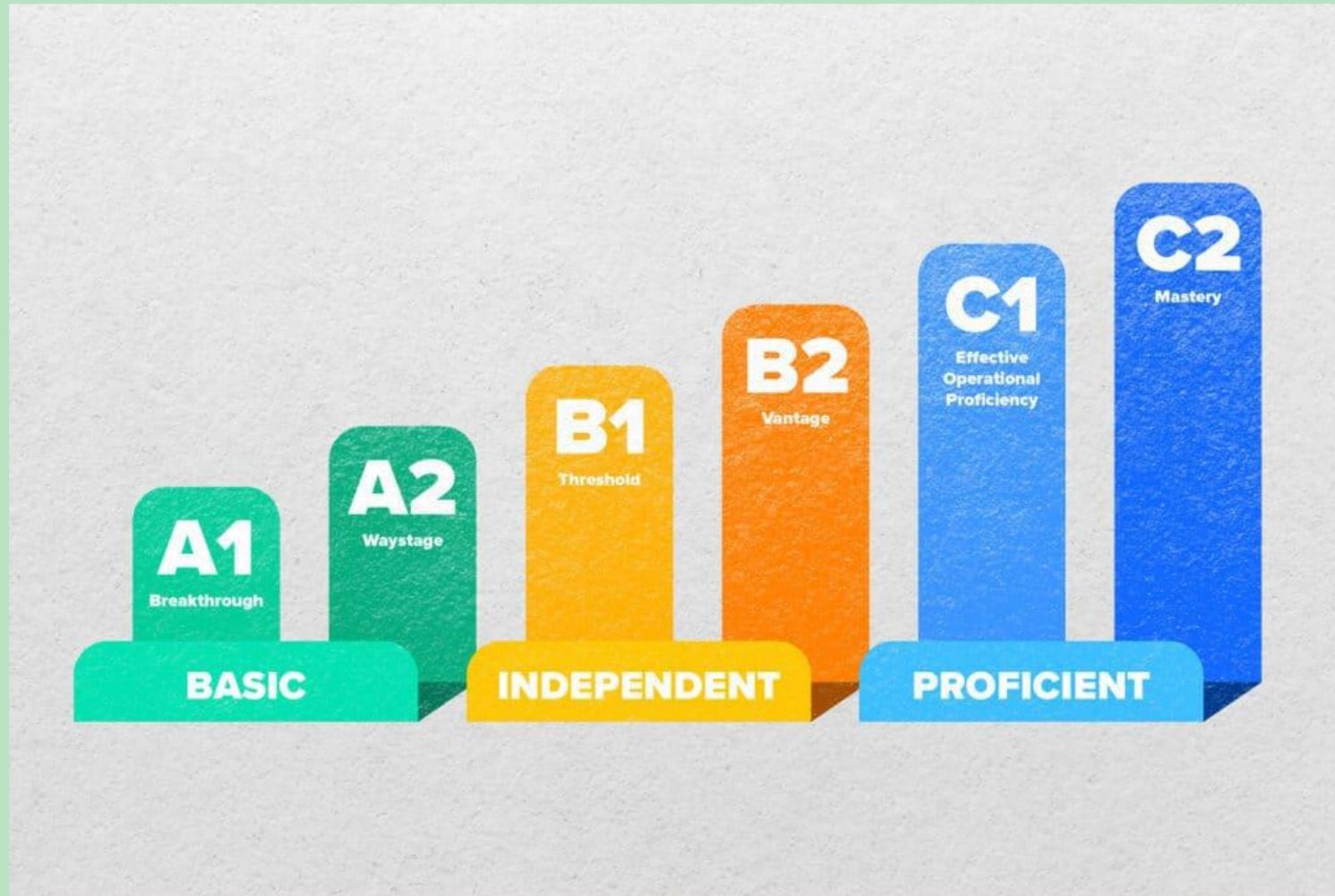
Today's lesson: pointers

- 4 possible options, only 1 is correct. 0 points for wrong answers, 2 points for right answers
- If you struggle reading the questions on video, open the pdf
- If you don't understand something, please ask
- If you want to look up the meaning of words by yourself, check [wordreference.com](https://www.wordreference.com)

From the *bando di concorso*:

"cinque quesiti a risposta multipla sulla conoscenza della lingua inglese al livello B2 del Quadro Comune Europeo di Riferimento per le lingue"

What does this mean?



The B2 level

- Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in their field of specialisation.
- Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with users of the target language quite possible without imposing strain on either party.
- Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.

What can they plausibly test?

Insights from the concorso ordinario 2020

1. Content comprehension

2. Lexis in context

3. Grammar and lexis

Concorso ordinario sample tests downloadable at:
<https://www.miur.gov.it/tracce-prove-scritte2>

Part 1: Content comprehension

- Understanding the content of the text
 - Author's attitudes and opinions
 - Facts (from the text, not your background knowledge)
- 65-100 word texts
- Texts may be more or less specialised e.g. about education, maths, science, arts

Part 1: Content comprehension

We're always being advised to stay safe online. But in an era where the Internet is part of our everyday lives – for work, fun, study, shopping, even managing finances – it's not always easy to spot the dangers. When joining online communities it's better to be cautious about the amount of personal information you share. For example, it isn't always necessary to use your real name as a username when registering for a service. You could instead use a pseudonym, or a name that doesn't give away your real identity to other users. (Adapted from FloJoe Splendid Learning)

The writer advises people who join an online community to

[a] give a lot of information about themselves.

[b] make sure they register correctly.

[c] use a false name to protect their identity.

[d] avoid the dangers of online shopping.

Part 1: Content comprehension

We're always being advised to stay safe online. But in an era where the Internet is part of our everyday lives – for work, fun, study, shopping, even managing finances – it's not always easy to spot the dangers. When joining online communities it's better to be cautious about the amount of personal information you share. For example, it isn't always necessary to use your real name as a username when registering for a service. You could instead use a pseudonym, or a name that doesn't give away your real identity to other users. (Adapted from FloJoe Splendid Learning)

The writer advises people who join an online community to

[a] give a lot of information about themselves → the opposite is true: “better to be cautious about the *amount* of personal information you share”

[b] make sure they register correctly → irrelevant/word hook: the word “register” is in the text but it doesn't say anything about registering correctly

[c] use a false name to protect their identity.

[d] avoid the dangers of online shopping → not wholly true: “shopping” is mentioned in the introduction but the writer does not explicitly advise people who join an online community to be careful about online shopping

Part 1: Content comprehension

Erech was located northwest of Ur (Tall Al-Muqayyar) in southeastern Iraq. One of the greatest cities of Sumer, it was enclosed by brickwork walls about 10 km in circumference, supposedly built by Gilgamesh. In the early 20th century, excavations traced successive cities within the walls: they date from the prehistoric Ubaid period (around 5000 Before Christ) down to Parthian times (second Century After Death). Urban life in the Erech-Jamdat Nasr period (3500- 2900 Before Christ) is more fully illustrated at Erech than any other Mesopotamian city. ([Britannica.com/.../Erech](#); adapted)

The ancient city of Erech

- [a] had massive brickwork walls.
- [b] was Gilgamesh's hometown.
- [c] is today's city of Jamdat Nasr.
- [d] was destroyed by excavations.

Part 1: Content comprehension

Erech was located northwest of Ur (Tall Al-Muqayyar) in southeastern Iraq. One of the greatest cities of Sumer, it was enclosed by brickwork walls about 10 km in circumference, supposedly built by Gilgamesh. In the early 20th century, excavations traced successive cities within the walls: they date from the prehistoric Ubaid period (around 5000 Before Christ) down to Parthian times (second Century After Death). Urban life in the Erech-Jamdat Nasr period (3500- 2900 Before Christ) is more fully illustrated at Erech than any other Mesopotamian city. (Britannica.com/.../Erech; adapted)

The ancient city of Erech

[a] had massive brickwork walls

[b] was Gilgamesh's hometown → Gilgamesh probably built it but we don't know if it was his hometown

[c] is today's city of Jamdat Nasr → Jamdat Nasr is only mentioned as a "period"

[d] was destroyed by excavations → word hook: "excavation" is mentioned but only to say that they revealed the existence of successive cities

Part 1: Content comprehension

Biology graduate Anna Forbes, 23, did her training in a research laboratory. In her opinion, she wouldn't know what she wanted to do if she hadn't arrived at a better understanding of different environments, or met the people she has met – especially her bosses, who have influenced her ambitions significantly. She thinks that training schemes are the best way to see what catches your interest: “It can be really valuable to try something completely new, and if you don't love it, it's not forever.” (The Guardian, Dec 20 2020; adapted)

According to Anna Forbes, doing a training course

- [a] can never develop the skills you need.
- [b] helps you realize the kind of work you like.
- [c] feels like you are not learning much.
- [d] helps navigate hostile work environments.

Part 1: Content comprehension

Biology graduate Anna Forbes, 23, did her training in a research laboratory. In her opinion, she wouldn't know what she wanted to do if she hadn't arrived at a better understanding of different environments, or met the people she has met – especially her bosses, who have influenced her ambitions significantly. She thinks that training schemes are **the best way to see what catches your interest**: “It can be really valuable to try something completely new, and if you don't love it, it's not forever.” (The Guardian, Dec 20 2020; adapted)

According to Anna Forbes, doing a training course

[a] can never develop the skills you need → Irrelevant: where does it talk about skills?

[b] helps you realize the kind of work you like.

[c] feels like you are not learning much.

[d] helps navigate hostile work environments → Word hook: “environment”

Part 1: Content comprehension

Today, the home-schooling movement is probably the fastest-growing form of education in the UK. The number of home-schooled children has risen by about 40% over three years. Around 48,000 children were being home-educated across the UK in 2016-2017, up from about 34,000 in 2014-15. But the real number is likely to be higher. Data is not collected centrally, and while local authorities keep a register of home-educated children, this only covers children who have been removed from school. Children who are never put into school are currently not required to register. (The Guardian, Nov 3 2018; adapted)

The real number of home-educated children

[a] can be certainly known by local authorities.

[b] is between 34,000 and 48,000 children.

[c] does not include pupils withdrawn from school.

[d] includes children who never entered a school.

Part 1: Content comprehension

Today, the home-schooling movement is probably the fastest-growing form of education in the UK. The number of home-schooled children has risen by about 40% over three years. Around 48,000 children were being home-educated across the UK in 2016-2017, up from about 34,000 in 2014-15. But the real number is likely to be higher. Data is not collected centrally, and while local authorities keep a register of home-educated children, this only covers children who have been removed from school. **Children who are never put into school** are currently not required to register. (The Guardian, Nov 3 2018; adapted)

The real number of home-educated children (*NB: this could have been phrased as “true” or “actual” number – beware of synonyms*)

[a] can be certainly known by local authorities → not true

[b] is between 34,000 and 48,000 children → not true – official numbers state 48,000 in 2016-17 but the article is from 2018

[c] does not include pupils withdrawn from school → something different is true: “this only covers children who have been removed (= withdrawn) from school” – beware of double negatives

[d] includes children who never entered a school → synonymous phrase: “Children who are never put into school”

Part 1: Content comprehension

It must be one of your worst nightmares to imagine being on board a plane and seeing a snake going past your seat. This is almost exactly what happened, though, on a recent AirAsia passenger plane. The vehicle was forced to divert and make an unscheduled landing after a snake was seen moving through the overhead lights. The incident, which was described as "very rare", took place last week on a flight from Kuala Lumpur to Tawau, on the eastern coast of Borneo island. (Adapted from The Bangkok Post, 14th February 2022)

The snake on the plane was seen

[a] on a flight to Kuala Lumpur where it has frequently been noticed.

[b] moving above passengers, on a plane travelling to Borneo island.

[c] by a passenger who was having an extremely bad nightmare.

[d] moving under the seats of some passengers at the back of the plane.

Part 1: Content comprehension

It must be one of your worst nightmares to imagine being on board a plane and seeing a snake going past your seat. This is almost exactly what happened, though, on a recent AirAsia passenger plane. The vehicle was forced to divert and make an unscheduled landing after a snake was seen moving through the overhead lights. The incident, which was described as "very rare", took place last week on a flight from Kuala Lumpur to Tawau, on the eastern coast of Borneo island. (Adapted from The Bangkok Post, 14th February 2022)

The snake on the plane was seen

[a] on a flight to Kuala Lumpur where it has frequently been noticed → the opposite is true: "described as very rare"

[b] moving above passengers, on a plane travelling to Borneo island → synonymous phrase: "a snake was seen moving through the **overhead lights**"

[c] by a passenger who was having an extremely bad nightmare → distractor: hypothetical, not true

[d] moving under the seats of some passengers at the back of the plane → the exact opposite is true: under vs. above

Part 2: Lexis in context

- 60-90 word texts
- Words underlined
- Importance of co-text (words surrounding the expression) + context (broader meaning)
- Main kinds of focus of questions:
 - Verbs (inc. phrasal verbs)
 - Nouns
 - Adjectives

Part 2: Lexis in context

In recent years, the Erasmus programme has been seen to be even more valuable in helping young generations develop both their self-confidence and their problem solving skills. When abroad, students not only have to study while adjusting to a different educational system, but they also need to be flexible as they are living in a very different context compared to their own countries. Still, this project has been successful precisely because it creates opportunities for growth and personal development. (Adapted from BBC news, 2nd February, 2022)

In this context, "adjust" means

- [a] thinking about something new
- [b] making the decision to move abroad
- [c] changing their behaviour appropriately
- [d] sharing their ideas with others

Part 2: Lexis in context

In recent years, the Erasmus programme has been seen to be even more valuable in helping young generations develop both their self-confidence and their problem solving skills. When abroad, students not only have to study while adjusting to a different educational system, but they also need to be flexible as they are living in a very different context compared to their own countries. Still, this project has been successful precisely because it creates opportunities for growth and personal development. (Adapted from BBC news, 2nd February, 2022)

In this context, "adjust" means

[a] thinking about something new

[b] making the decision to move abroad → irrelevant to the co-text

[c] changing their behaviour appropriately

[d] sharing their ideas with others

Part 2: Lexis in context

Seren had always been petrified of the water and when she was a child, she was not so comfortable with swimming. Her parents, however, tried to encourage her to persevere so that she soon started taking part in competitions. Although her initial failure to win annoyed her terribly, she felt that she just had to swim more frequently. At some point, something clicked with her and in college she actually became a professional swimmer. (Adapted from BBC news Jan 30, 2022)

In this context, “petrified” means

- [a] very happy indeed
- [b] transformed into stone
- [c] extremely frightened
- [d] not at all scared

Part 2: Lexis in context

Seren had always been petrified of the water and when she was a child, she was not so comfortable with swimming. Her parents, however, tried to encourage her to persevere so that she soon started taking part in competitions. Although her initial failure to win annoyed her terribly, she felt that she just had to swim more frequently. At some point, something clicked with her and in college she actually became a professional swimmer. (Adapted from BBC news Jan 30, 2022)

In this context, “petrified” means

[a] very happy indeed

[b] transformed into stone → literal

[c] extremely frightened

[d] not at all scared

What can we learn from this question?

1. Two opposites (frightened vs. not scared) – one was right
2. Be careful with negatives
3. If we don't know the word, the second part of the text can help us get it
4. If we know the word, we don't need to read the full text in some cases

Part 2: Lexis in context

The school closures in the spring of 2020 were hard enough for students. But this winter, as the Omicron variant caused a peak in coronavirus case numbers, it seemed as if the problems would never end. Some school districts extended winter break or returned temporarily to remote learning. And some schools, already struggling with a nationwide labor shortage, were forced to cancel classes when teachers communicated they were sick. (Adapted from The New York Times, Jan 30, 2022)

“labor shortage” in this context means:

- [a] reduction of available teachers
- [b] reduction in teachers’ working hours
- [c] teachers being too ill to work
- [d] teachers’ limited competence

Part 2: Lexis in context

The school closures in the spring of 2020 were hard enough for students. But this winter, as the Omicron variant caused a peak in coronavirus case numbers, it seemed as if the problems would never end. Some school districts extended winter break or returned temporarily to remote learning. And some schools, already struggling with a nationwide labor shortage, were forced to cancel classes when teachers communicated they were sick. (Adapted from The New York Times, Jan 30, 2022)

“labor shortage” in this context means:

[a] reduction of available teachers

[b] reduction in teachers’ working hours → labor = working people

[c] teachers being too ill to work → a possible cause of the shortage; distracting because it relates to the second part of the sentence

[d] teachers’ limited competence → completely irrelevant

Part 2: Lexis in context

Will we still even have physical school buildings in 2050, or might our entire education system have changed? Traditional models that have flourished over the past two hundred years in many parts of the West have remained remarkably fixed. Social, economic and technological changes, however, may dictate changes to existing models as technology provides the potential for more students to gain greater access to education and everyone may be provided with more personalized learning paths and flexible choices in what and how we study. (Adapted from Interesting Engineering 8 June 2021)

"have flourished" in this context means

[a] have declined

[b] have attracted no attention

[c] have not been adopted widely

[d] have spread successfully

Part 2: Lexis in context

Will we still even have physical school buildings in 2050, or might our entire education system have changed? Traditional models that have flourished over the past two hundred years in many parts of the West have remained remarkably fixed. Social, economic and technological changes, however, may dictate changes to existing models as technology provides the potential for more students to gain greater access to education and everyone may be provided with more personalized learning paths and flexible choices in what and how we study. (Adapted from Interesting Engineering 8 June 2021)

"have flourished" in this context means

[a] have declined

[b] have attracted no attention

[c] have not been adopted widely

[d] have spread successfully → flourish – flower – *fiorire*?

What can we learn from this question?

Options b and c are almost synonymous; option a is not synonymous but still describes a lack or decrease in uptake, i.e. something negative. Based on the co-text and context, does it make sense to choose one of the 3 negative options?

Part 2: Lexis in context

Many individuals—particularly women and certain minorities—say that online molestation is on the rise. Social media has created this rise because it is easier to say unpleasant things online, than it is to someone's face. Several people and organisations, fed up with the prevalence of cyberbullying and trolling, have called for governments and social media companies to find solutions. Finding a solution that both stops molestation and preserves freedom of expression is not simple. Many have looked to corporations, such as Facebook, asking them to report online molestation directly to police, deactivate accounts, or both.
(British Library, Jan 28 2015; adapted)

“fed up with” in this context means

- [a] frustrated by
- [b] pleased with
- [c] satisfied with
- [d] happy about

Part 2: Lexis in context

Many individuals—particularly women and certain minorities—say that online molestation is on the rise. Social media has created this rise because it is easier to say unpleasant things online, than it is to someone's face. Several people and organisations, fed up with the prevalence of cyberbullying and trolling, have called for governments and social media companies to find solutions. Finding a solution that both stops molestation and preserves freedom of expression is not simple. Many have looked to corporations, such as Facebook, asking them to report online molestation directly to police, deactivate accounts, or both. (British Library, Jan 28 2015; adapted)

“fed up with” in this context means

[a] frustrated by

[b] pleased with

[c] satisfied with

[d] happy about

What can we learn from this question?

- Same as the previous question (3 positive options, 1 negative one)
- Importance of co-text and context: how could people and organisations be “happy/pleased with” cyberbullying? And why would there need to be a solution?
- Some questions are objectively easier than others

Part 3: Grammar and lexis

- Grammar questions separate from lexis questions
- Grammar:
 - Verb tenses
 - Gerund vs. infinitive
 - Specific structures e.g. used to; be used to
 - Reported speech
 - Conditionals
 - Modifiers and intensifiers (e.g. *very*, *extremely*)
 - Linking words (e.g. *therefore*)
- Lexis
 - Prepositions
 - Idioms
 - Collocations
 - Phrasal verbs

Part 3: Grammar

Don't forget _____ me if you need to change the time of our meeting.

[a] contacting

[b] to contact

[c] to contacting

[d] contact

Part 3: Grammar

Don't forget _____ me if you need to change the time of our meeting.

[a] contacting → could this work? Only in a different meaning of forget: *I will never forget visiting the Taj Mahal: it was breathtaking!*

[b] to contact

[c] to contacting → does “to + ing” ever happen? Yes, e.g. after “look forward to”, “being used to”

[d] contact

Part 3: Grammar

Try to avoid _____ the secret away this time. We want to organize a surprise party for her.

[a] giving

[b] give

[c] gives

[d] gave

Part 3: Grammar

Try to avoid _____ the secret away this time. We want to organize a surprise party for her.

[a] giving

[b] give

[c] gives

[d] gave

Other verbs that take the –ing form:

consider, dislike, feel like, finish, give up, miss, practise,
recommend, suggest

Also: we can learn that we don't necessarily need to know
the meaning of phrasal verbs to answer correctly!

Part 3: Grammar

If I became a Member of Parliament at the next general elections, I _____ put a lot of money into education.

[a] would have

[b] would

[c] had

[d] had been

Part 3: Grammar

If I became a Member of Parliament at the next general elections, I _____ put a lot of money into education.

[a] would have

[b] would

[c] had

[d] had been

Part 3: Grammar

When I was in my teens, I used _____ the piano every day, from 2 to 3 p.m.

[a] to play

[b] to playing

[c] play

[d] playing

Part 3: Grammar

When I was in my teens, I used _____ the piano every day, from 2 to 3 p.m.

[a] to play

[b] to playing

[c] play

[d] playing

Part 3: Grammar

She still _____ whether to get a new TV or not, but she'll make her final choice tomorrow.

[a] hasn't decided

[b] haven't decided

[c] hasn't decide

[d] haven't deciding

Part 3: Grammar

She still _____ whether to get a new TV or not, but she'll make her final choice tomorrow.

[a] hasn't decided

[b] haven't decided

[c] hasn't decide → careful with the spelling

[d] haven't deciding

Part 3: Grammar

I _____ for your call for ages, where have you been?!

[a] am waiting

[b] have been waiting

[c] are waiting

[d] wait

Part 3: Grammar

I _____ for your call for ages, where have you been?!

[a] am waiting

[b] have been waiting

[c] are waiting

[d] wait

Part 3: Grammar

I now prefer working from home _____ I do not have to commute

[a] so that

[b] so than

[c] such as

[d] such then

Part 3: Grammar

I now prefer working from home _____ I do not have to commute

[a] so that

[b] so than → careful with spelling

[c] such as → wrong meaning

[d] such then

Part 3: Lexis

My son can count very rapidly. He is excellent _____ Maths.

[a] in

[b] for

[c] at

[d] on

Part 3: Lexis

My son can count very rapidly. He is excellent _____ Maths.

[a] in → common mistake

[b] for

[c] at

[d] on

Part 3: Lexis

He was thrown _____ the gym for being drunk.

[a] away

[b] out off

[c] out

[d] out of

Part 3: Lexis

He was thrown _____ the gym for being drunk.

[a] away

[b] out off → careful with spelling

[c] out → this may be acceptable in spoken English

[d] out of



A word of warning about «phrasal verbs»

In short: not everything is a phrasal verbs

Example: verb *throw*

- I caught the ball and *threw it **to*** my mate
- Can you *throw it **in*** the bin please?
- I'm going to *throw **away*** my old clothes
- The meaning of the verb *throw* doesn't change!

- My son ***threw up*** his dinner – it wasn't very nice.
- This is a phrasal verb: the meaning changes

Phrasal verbs: where to find out more

- Please read this guidance from the ELT Concourse about what is and what isn't a phrasal verb (so it's not worth memorising)
- If you do feel you want to memorise more phrasal verbs, this is the list of the most common phrasal verbs according to Norbert Schmitt, a well known scholar in the field of vocabulary acquisition.

Part 3: Lexis

Take your time to write the essay: don't just write the first thing that crosses your _____.

[a] mind

[b] brain

[c] idea

[d] thought

Part 3: Lexis

Take your time to write the essay: don't just write the first thing that crosses your _____.

[a] mind

[b] brain

[c] idea

[d] thought

Part 3: Lexis

I'm trying to cut _____ on the amount of coffee I drink.

[a] across

[b] up

[c] down

[d] in

Part 3: Lexis

I'm trying to cut _____ on the amount of coffee I drink.

[a] across

[b] up

[c] down

[d] in

Part 3: Lexis

A hundred workers risk being _____ and sent home with no jobs, due to the pandemic.

[a] promoted

[b] sacked

[c] retired

[d] rewarded

Part 3: Lexis

A hundred workers risk being _____ and sent home with no jobs, due to the pandemic.

[a] promoted

[b] sacked = fired, dismissed, laid off

[c] retired

[d] rewarded

Part 3: Lexis

'Let's go out for dinner tonight' John _____

[a] suggested

[b] told

[c] spoke

[d] presented

Part 3: Lexis

'Let's go out for dinner tonight' John _____

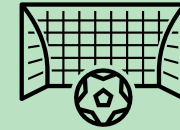
[a] suggested

[b] told

[c] spoke

[d] presented

Final pointers to reach your goal



- Plausible distractors
- Word «hooks»: peculiar words they want you to go looking for
- Negative questions
- Double negatives
- Partially correct answers
- Author's opinions vs. facts
- Your background knowledge
- Frequent mistakes used as incorrect answers
- The opposite is true
- The answer is at the end of the text
- The answer is at the beginning of the text
- Careful with spelling

Thank you for joining us today!

Learn more

- Tracce prove scritte 2020: <https://www.miur.gov.it/tracce-prove-scritte2>
- YouTube channel for the recording: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCVckyIky4lCVlRe3DXRP4wg>
- Grammar explanations: https://www.englisch-hilfen.de/en/grammar_list/alle.htm

Unit 9 of the LanguagEd preparation courses:

- Explanations
- 85 quizzes
- Grammar webinars

Coupon code
WEBINAR2
(expires 19 March)

<https://languaged.thinkific.com/pages/corsi-concorso-straordinario-ter>

The screenshot displays the LanguagEd course interface. On the left, a navigation menu for 'Unità 9. Inglese livello B2' (0/19) is visible, listing sections: 'Introduzione e formato dei quesiti' (TEXT), 'Soluzioni commentate dei quesiti' (TEXT), 'Come prepararsi ai quesiti di inglese' (TEXT), and four quizzes (each with 12 questions). The main content area shows a video recording titled 'Webinar 1 - Video recording'. The video content includes the LanguagEd logo, the title 'Introduction', and a list of session topics: 'Structure of the session:' with sub-points 'Quizzes', 'Explanation of present, past and future verb tenses (form and usage)', and 'Q&A'. A video feed of a presenter, Chiara Bruzzano, is visible on the right. At the bottom of the video player, there is a 'COMPLETE & CONTINUE →' button and a copyright notice: 'Copyright LanguagEd 2024. All rights reserved.' The page number '2' is also visible in the bottom right corner of the video player.

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a four-leaf clover. The hand is positioned in the lower-left quadrant, with the thumb and index finger gently gripping the stem of the clover. The clover has four distinct, rounded leaflets that are a vibrant green color. The background is a solid, dark green, which makes the clover and the hand stand out. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the leaves and the skin of the hand.

Best of luck, everyone!