



English II Exam 'Época de Recurso'

29 June 2015

Time allowed: 2 hours (9h-11h)

A. Writing (13.5 points)

Consider the following figure and write a text (300-400 words) in answer to the prompt.

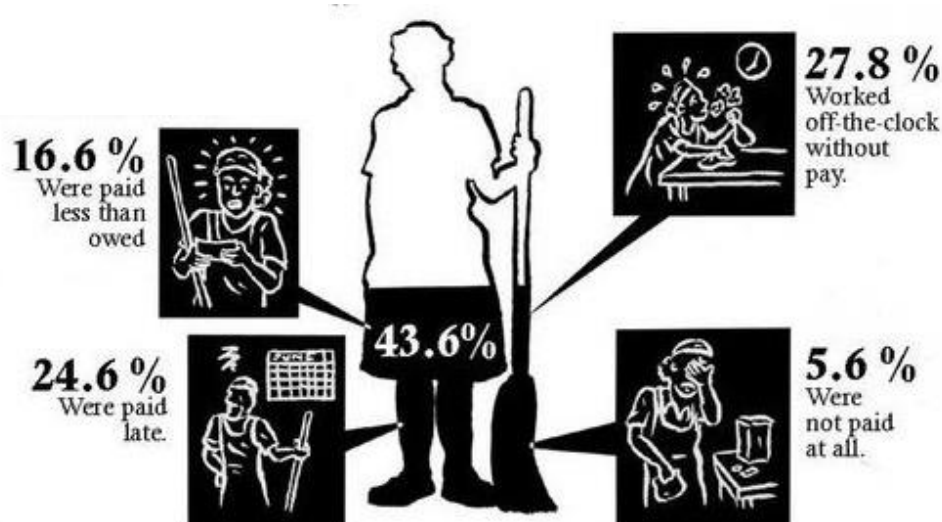


Figure 1.

Source: <https://anticap.wordpress.com/2013/10/page/2/>

What employment problem is represented in the image? Who is affected by it and what can be done to prevent it?

Your text will be marked on relevance and breadth of content, discourse management and genre, appropriacy and range of vocabulary and structures, and grammatical accuracy.

B. Reading comprehension (4.55 points)

Read the text on page 2 and answer the questions that follow it.

Schumpeter's notebook :

The downside of diversity

The Economist, 21 January 2014, BY OUR SCHUMPETER COLUMNIST

1. THE closest thing the business world has to a universally acknowledged truth is that diversity is a good thing: the more companies hire people from different backgrounds the more competitive they will become. Diversity helps companies to overcome talent shortages by enlarging their talent pools. It helps them to cope with globalisation by
5. expanding their cultural horizon. It stimulates innovation by bringing together different sorts of people. And so on.

- But what about the downside of diversity? It does not pay to ask this question. Many countries have equal-opportunity laws on their books. American universities (and many others as well) are institutionally committed to the idea that diversity promotes learning and creativity. Most important perhaps, nobody wants to come across as unsympathetic to minorities or unappreciative of cultural variety. Yet a glance beyond the corporate-diversity statements suggests a more complicated picture. It is notable how many of the world's best companies, such as McKinsey and Apple, have cult-like cultures—probably because they are also very diverse: they need a strong
10. culture. It is also notable how many of the world's best companies are rooted in small towns: think of Lego (Billund) or Walmart (Bentonville). Distinctive religious groups such as the Mormons in America and the Parsis in India have also made an outsized contribution to corporate life.

- It is far too easy to present “diversity” in one-sided terms: as a triumph of enlightenment over bigotry and creativity over closed-mindedness. But the subject is too important to be left to the cliché-mongers. Diversity can bring risks as well as benefits and perils as well as perks. There are trade-offs to be made, for example between the trust that comes from sharing a common background and the cultural sensitivity that comes from employing people from different parts of the world.

15. Roy Y.J .Chua, of Harvard Business School, is one of the few academics to produce serious studies of this subject. Mr Chua agrees that in a world of multinational corporations and global product markets success depends more than ever on your ability to foster multicultural thinking and cross-border collaboration. But in a paper in the current issue of the *Academy of Management Journal* (“The Costs of Ambient
20. Cultural Disharmony: Indirect Intercultural Conflict in Social Environment Undermine Creativity”) he goes on to note that getting people from different nationalities and cultural backgrounds to co-operate is fraught with difficulties. At best differences in world-view and cultural styles can produce “intercultural anxiety”, at worst outright conflict. The very thing that can produce added creativity—the collision of different
25. cultures—can also produce friction. The question is whether the creativity is worth the conflict.

- Mr Chua argues that creativity in multicultural settings is highly vulnerable to what he calls “ambient cultural disharmony”. Tension between people over matters of culture, he says, can pollute the wider environment and reduce “multicultural
30. creativity”, meaning people's ability to see non-obvious connections between ideas from different cultures. “Ambient cultural disharmony” persuades people to give up on making such connections because they conclude that it is not worth the trouble.

- Mr Chua also says that “ambient cultural disharmony” has its strongest impact on people who regard themselves as open-minded. Closed-minded people expect
35. cultural tensions. Open-minded people don't expect them and so react to them more strongly. In another irony, Mr Chua also discovered that the only people who are not affected by cultural conflict, at least in terms of creativity, are the people who are at the heart of it. They are more likely to explain the problems in personal rather than cultural terms.

Name: Number:

B. Reading Comprehension (Cont.) (0.35 each)Choose **one** answer to each question and write the letter clearly in the box.

1. The main purpose of the article is
a. to describe management practice.
b. to argue that diversity does not lead to better productivity.
c. to report recent research in the field of management.
d. to explain why the idea of cultural diversity is a cliché.
2. Why is cultural diversity considered a good thing for businesses?
a. Because it always leads to greater creativity.
b. Because it can make companies more competitive.
c. Because it helps companies reach local markets.
d. Because it unites a global company.
3. Why does the writer say “In another irony” (line 46)?
a. Because it is ironic that people who are open minded suffer most from ambient cultural disharmony.
b. Because it is ironic that creative people are never affected by ambient cultural disharmony.
c. Because it is ironic that ambient cultural disharmony reduces creativity.
d. None of the answers is true.
4. What benefit(s) does a mono-culture have?
a. All the answers are correct.
b. It promotes a strong cult-like culture.
c. It helps the company reach global markets easily.
d. It provides a common set of beliefs and expectations.
5. Which statement is true?
a. The writer implies that most multinational corporations and US universities have not critically examined the rhetoric on cultural diversity.
b. The writer implies that most corporations and US universities have multi-cultural staff or students.
c. The writer implies that most multinational corporations and US universities need to take a stand on cultural diversity for political reasons.
d. All the statements are true.
6. Why does the writer mention McKinsey and Apple?
a. They are examples of companies that are committed to the idea that diversity stimulates innovation.
b. They are successful companies.
c. They are examples of successful companies that have a multicultural staff but a standardized organisational culture.
d. Their unity has made a great contribution to corporate life.
7. What is the importance of Roy Chua’s work?
a. He is the first to study the impact of cultural diversity on creativity.
b. His results alert companies to potential pitfalls of a culturally diverse staff.
c. He shows that success depends only on a business’ ability to foster multicultural thinking and cross-border collaboration.
d. All the answers are correct.

8. What can lead to ambient cultural disharmony?
- A worker attributes a problem to the personality of a co-worker rather than differences in culture.
 - A worker expects there to be problems due to differences in cultures.
 - Workers are able to see non-obvious connections between ideas from different cultures.
 - All the answers are correct.



Reference, substitution and ellipsis

What do the following expressions, which are highlighted in the text, refer to? I.e. what is their specific meaning in context? (0.35 points each)

- it (line 4)
- them (line 4)
- this question (line 7)
- they (line 14)
- the subject (line 20)

C. Vocabulary (1.95 points)

The following sentences were taken from English language newspapers. Complete each space with a suitable word or expression. The first letter(s) and a paraphrase of the meaning are given. You will need to put verbs in the right tense. You might need to add a preposition. (0.39 points each)

- Female ex-prisoners are still **d**....., even by voluntary sector employers, and they shouldn't be. (not treated fairly or the same as other employees)
- Amazon's recruitment of 80,000 temporary workers is a symptom of America's culture of the low-paid **s**..... **w**..... (someone whose job only lasts one season)
- A women's rights charity behind a t-shirt campaign is investigating claims by a newspaper that the products were made in **s**..... conditions. (A shop or factory in which employees work long hours at low wages under poor conditions)
- Managers must make employment wellbeing an absolute priority, if for no other reason than to minimise the cost of **s**..... **l**..... during the recession. (time off from work that workers can use to stay home to address their health and safety needs without losing pay)
- Another business that **r**..... to the south-west is Treetots Yoga, which moved from Manchester to Devon when its founder Jessica Healy decided she wanted to be nearer her parents (moved)

Answers

A. Writing

A good answer will identify the topic in the image, and explain what it is and what is being done about it. Possible content includes, but is not restricted to:

- The figure represents wage theft.
- Wage theft occurs when an employee is not paid the correct wages that he/she is owed. It may consist of being paid late, being forced to work off the clock without pay, not being paid for overtime, or being paid less than owed.
- Although wage theft occurs in many countries, it came to prominence in the US, where many migrant workers suffer from it.
- As the figure shows, 43.6% of workers have experienced wage theft. It generally happens in low-paid jobs such as gardening or building construction, or in the fast food industry. Recently large employers such as McDonalds and Walmart have been accused of wage theft.
- There are moves to reinforce or toughen legislation against it in some states of the US.

B. Reading comprehension

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|----|---|-----|--|
| 1. | C | 9. | it = diversity (reference) |
| 2. | B | 10. | them = companies (reference) |
| 3. | A | 11. | this question = But what about the down side of this diversity? (reference) |
| 4. | D | 12. | they = the world's best companies, such as McKinsey and Apple, which have cult-like cultures (reference) |
| 5. | D | 13. | the subject = diversity (reference) |
| 6. | C | | |
| 7. | B | | |
| 8. | A | | |

C. Vocabulary

1. discriminated against;
2. seasonal worker;
3. sweatshop;
4. sick leave;
5. relocated.