

Midterm test

English II

8 April 2016

A. Reading Comprehension (6 points)

Read the following text and answer the questions on page 3.

Booby-trapped breakfasts are a rotten way to choose staff

Lucy Kellaway

1. When Walt Bettinger, chief executive of Charles Schwab, is thinking about hiring someone, he invites them out to breakfast. He arrives early, takes the waiter to one side, hands over a large tip and tells him to mess up his guest's order. He then sits back and watches the candidate's response.
5. "That will help me understand how they deal with adversity," he recently told the New York Times. "Are they upset, are they frustrated or are they understanding? Life is like that, and business is like that. It's just another way to get a look inside their heart rather than their head."
As he doesn't reveal his favoured response to getting scrambled eggs when you've asked for poached, I've been trying to work it out for myself. When candidates greet the screw-up with silence, does **that** make them craven wimps? Or could it suggest they are pragmatic and care more about landing the right job than the right breakfast? Then again, maybe the scrambled eggs looked so good, they decided they never really wanted poached **ones** anyway? While this test is a rotten way of looking
10. inside the hearts of job candidates, it does offer a glimpse into Mr Bettinger's own. Not only is his trick in bad faith, it is at odds with Charles Schwab's business model — based on honesty and transparency. To practise it is a bit off, but to boast about it is insane.
Any CEO who tells journalists he has found the interview silver bullet is talking nonsense, as there is no such thing. There was Mark Zuckerberg recently insisting that
15. he only hires people he would like to have as his boss. **This** sounds delightfully humble coming from the 31-year-old tycoon, but I don't believe it for a moment. Facebook employs 13,000 people, and if Mr Zuckerberg would be happy to work for every one of them, that makes him worryingly undiscerning. Even if I believed him, his test is not a good way of hiring. A company in which everyone wants to be a chief is not going to
20. work.
Still, there was one part of Mr Bettinger's approach that was spot on. That is to invite candidates to a restaurant — although he picked the wrong meal. Breakfast is too early and too uncongenial: lunch is the one to go for. For the past 20 years I have been interviewing people in restaurants for the weekend series Lunch with the FT. For
25. the same amount of time I've been doing straight interviews minus the lunch, and I can confirm that the first is invariably a better way of doing it. **That** is partly for the circumstantial clues a meal provides. Is the person nice to the waiter? What do they order? Are they decisive? Greedy? Can they manage a knife and fork? More than that, what lunch has going for it is that it demands small talk, which is a much better way of
30. getting to know someone than big talk. The big talk of the normal interview has a serious flaw: **it** can easily be gamed. The standard questions about strengths and weaknesses — as well as the pseudo clever ones asked at Goldman Sachs about getting out of a blender if you found yourself the size of a pencil — all lend themselves to pat answers. Even the supposedly revealing question favoured by Miranda Kalinowski,
35. head of hiring at Facebook — "On your very best day at work, what did you do?" — offers plenty of scope for pretending to be someone you are not. Were I asked this, I'd keep quiet about the great day I had recently which involved a long gossipy lunch with
- 40.

a colleague, lots of praise and precious little work. Instead I'd fabricate a day during which I came up with a genius idea, and slogged away to find a way of making it happen.

45. Small talk, by contrast, can't be gamed, because it seems too small and random to bother about. Yet through this meandering and incidental chat we often get a better glimpse of a person — in both mind and heart. When I interviewed the writer Johathan Franzen recently, I asked him big questions to which I got predictable big answers. But when we started talking about DIY* he let slip that he had just painted a room in his house himself because he can't bear paying people to work for him — and that he wasn't satisfied until he'd applied four coats of paint.

50. Above all, there is something about the curious business of chewing and swallowing together that is levelling; it is easier to work out if you like someone when eating than when eyeball to eyeball in an interview room. I'm not suggesting that all you need to get the right person into a job is to break bread with them. Hiring is hard — the evidence suggests that companies that do it more thoroughly tend to make better choices. All I'm saying is that at the end of the process, lunch should be the final course.

The Financial Times, February 28, 2016 2:40 pm

* DIY = do it yourself

B. Vocabulary (2 points)

The following sentences were taken from the business section of 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 conjugate a verb, and/or you may need to add a preposition. Write your answers on your test answer sheet. (0.4 points each)

1. It is essential that content marketers leave room for experimental and innovative ideas that are quick and cheap to execute. This allows for "fast failures" that can be learned from and **i.....** upon. (*continuously tested and improved following feedback from each test*)
2. I **a.....** the same job using an English name and got the interview. (*submitted my candidacy for*)
3. Facebook only **h.....** seven black people in latest diversity count. (*gave jobs to*)
4. The UK has been named the most **e.....** country in Europe. (*having the qualities necessary to set up new businesses and business deals*)
5. Choosing the wrong way to **h..... n.....** can lead to recriminations. (*tell your employer you intend to leave your job soon within a set period of time*)

C. Writing (12 points)

Write an application letter that would accompany your CV based on the job on page 4. The job was advertised in The Guardian, and Aspire is a recruitment agency. Assume that the letter would be sent as a Word attachment and that you will complete your degree in 2016. Otherwise do not invent qualifications or experience that you have not had. (Max. 1½ page) Your letter will be marked on relevance of content, control of the genre, discourse management, appropriacy and range of structures and vocabulary, and grammatical accuracy.

A. Reading comprehension


Reference, substitution and ellipsis

What do the following expressions (highlighted in the text) refer to? (0.4 points each)

1. that (line 11)
2. ones (line 14)
3. this (line 20)
4. That (line 31)
5. it (line 36)

Decide whether each statement is TRUE (T) or FALSE (F) according to the text. Write your answer in the box. (0.5 points each)

6. The purpose of the article is to explain a hiring strategy used by an employer.
7. The objective of the breakfast interview is to see how the applicant reacts to unforeseen events.
8. The breakfast interview is essentially a stress interview.
9. Typical behavioural questions reveal the truth about a candidate because they can't be prepared in advance.
10. There is likely to be as much small talk at a breakfast interview as at a lunch one.
11. Kellaway thinks that Walt Bettinger's breakfast test is unethical in light of the ethics of the company.
12. Kellaway believes that small talk with an applicant over lunch provides an employer with valuable information about the applicant.
13. Jonathan Franzen's DIY work suggests he is a perfectionist and likes to delegate.

SEO Executive - Global Media Agency	
	<p>Posted 25 Feb 2016 Closes 24 Mar 2016 Ref 1005744 Contact Kate Cottrell Industry Marketing & PR, Digital Marketing, Marketing Agency, Marketing analytics, Media, Advertising, Digital Media Hours Full Time Contract Permanent</p>
<p>Recruiter ASPIRE Location London Salary £21000.00 - £24000.00 per annum + Benefits</p>	
<p>The Company A leading media agency are now looking to add an SEO Executive to their growing team. You will be joining an agency with a great team culture and fast paced, hard working environment. They offer excellent benefits and a solid progression structure. For this position you will be working with foreign markets, so fluency in another language is highly desirable.</p> <p>The Role As SEO Executive, your duties will include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Work with the team to test and innovate all aspects of SEO and Content -Develop strong working relationships with clients and external stakeholders -Use Google Analytics and other packages as required to carry out reporting -Staying up to date on best practice and communicating any developments with the team -Provide data and keyword research for new business pitches <p>The Person To be considered you will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Degree qualification -Proven experience working on successful SEO campaigns -Copywriting experience desirable -Experience with SEO campaigns utilising universal search -Very keen to increase SEO and digital marketing knowledge -Native or B2B fluency in a second language is essential <p>Apply for this role today by sending me your CV via this website. Please note all applications will be made in confidence. Feel free to call me directly on: Kate Cottrell Consultant, Graduate Digital Team - Aspire 0207 6123879</p>	

Search engine optimization (SEO) is the process of affecting the visibility of a [website](#) or a [web page](#) in a [search engine](#)'s unpaid results—often referred to as "natural," "[organic](#)," or "earned" results. In general, the earlier (or higher ranked on the search results page), and more frequently a site appears in the search results list, the more visitors it will receive from the search engine's users. SEO may target different kinds of search, including [image search](#), [local search](#), [video search](#), [academic search](#), news search and industry-specific [vertical search](#) engines.

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Search_engine_optimization

Answers

A. Reading comprehension

Reference, substitution & ellipsis (0.4 points each)

1. greeting the screw-up with silence
2. eggs
3. Mark Zuckerberg saying that he only hires people he would like to have as his boss the chief executive and the senior executive he had recently hired
4. that lunch is a better way of interviewing people
5. the big talk of an interview

True / false (0.5 points each)

6. False
7. True
8. False
9. False
10. False
11. True
12. True
13. False

B. Vocabulary (0.4 points each)

1. iterated
2. applied for
3. hired
4. entrepreneurial
5. hand in your notice

C. Writing (12 points)

The letter will follow the conventions for an application letter, using appropriate organisation/layout, structures and vocabulary. It will begin “Dear Ms Cottell” and finish “Yours sincerely, ...”The register will be objective sounding. It will explain how the candidate developed the skills, qualities, knowledge and experience. Information flow will be fluent and logical and there will be few grammatical mistakes. Essential information includes: reference: 1005744; SEO Executive for a global media agency (job title), posted on the Guardian website (where & when the ad was posted); that the applicant has or will be completing a degree; is native speaker of Portuguese or another language; has good interpersonal skills and is able to work well in teams; has good writing skills; is interested in marketing; is keen to learn more about SEO and digital marketing.