

Midterm test

English II

6 April 2017

A. Reading Comprehension (6 points)

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

First impressions are critical to keeping hold of staff

Rhymer Rigby

1. At logistics company DHL, initiating new staff starts long before they show up for work. First, they are sent their contract in an attractive folder. Next, two weeks before they are due to begin, they receive a package called DHL in a Box. This includes a video, a copy of their learning programme and a welcome card from their manager and colleagues.
5. “The courier, who is a DHL employee, also welcomes them to the company,” says Regine Buettner, global head of HR at DHL Express. “This has a huge impact on the new employee.” When they finally join, the new hire and their manager are given an employee journal, detailing what the manager needs to do and the company’s training programmes.
10. There is just one chance to make a good first impression, yet many organisations give the joining process little or no thought. New recruits often complain about being abandoned on day one with nothing to do, being given a desk or car that still has the previous user’s rubbish in it and having to wait weeks for a phone or laptop to appear.
15. All this matters for two reasons. The first is that large numbers of employees leave in their first year. According to a survey by the Utah-based software company Bamboo HR, 16-17 per cent of new hires leave in the first three months. The second is that replacing employees is expensive. The Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development reckons that a bad hiring decision — which brings disruption, lost productivity and the expense of finding a replacement — costs an average of £8,200, rising to £12,000 for more senior people. Topgrading, a hiring methodology company, puts this figure far higher, at more than £100,000.
20. “New joiners make the decision to stay within 90 days,” says Louise Brownhill, chief learning officer at PwC, the professional services firm. PwC defines the onboarding period from the moment new hires accept a job offer to the point they have worked for six months, although there are plans to extend this to a year. Ms Brownhill says good onboarding is a combination of making new staff feel welcome and making them productive as quickly as possible.
25. “We make sure things like their computer are in place and they know where to get coffee,” says Ms Brownhill. “They also have a mentor or a buddy. As PwC has large annual graduate intakes, many new hires often have a sense of camaraderie anyway. “We do a lot around purpose and ensuring that people are feel like valued members of staff as soon as soon as possible.” Mr Brownhill adds that PwC is looking at bespoke onboarding, where the programme is tailored precisely to the individual. “If, for instance, you have a boomerang hire [someone who has worked at the company before] you don’t need to onboard them in the same way as a new hire.”
30. Others go for quirky onboarding rituals. The Massachusetts-based removals business Gentle Giant takes new hires for a demanding run around Harvard Stadium.
35. CareerBliss, the Californian job site, has them sing their favourite song to the company and the Chicago-based consultancy Salo plays new recruits their favourite songs as
- 40.

42. they are led to a desk covered with balloons. Ian Gooden, chief executive of the HR consultancy Chiumento, says that although these sorts of activities may seem frivolous, they serve a real purpose.
45. "When someone first comes through the door, there's a tremendous combination of excitement and fear. You want to ensure you keep the excitement and reduce the fear." Doing something fun shows that a business cares enough to make an effort. In the longer term, he says, companies need to be rather more prosaic. New hires will need a buddy or mentor and a timetable. They will also need to be taught
50. the systems and, just as importantly, the culture. In addition, they will have to be told what is acceptable and what is not.
- "You are an outsider," says Mr Gooden. "Onboarding should make you an insider."

The Financial Times, 28 February 2017

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. All letters are in lower case. 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. Stephan Shakespeare, YouGov's chief executive, said: We are well positioned for the future and see significant opportunities for further growth of our existing **s..... d.....** products and data services.... *([products based on] the results of a research study which is conducted and funded by a market research firm but not for any specific client)*
2. The quickest way **g..... s.....** using this route is to simply refuse to carry out a reasonable routine request from a manager.. *(to be fired)*
3. The Bank of England governor's huge salary is bolstered by amazing **p.....** *(fringe benefits)*
4. Each **f..... g.....** was made up of between five and eight young people. *(a group of people assembled to participate in a discussion about a product before it is launched, or to provide feedback on a political campaign, television series, etc.)*
5. The **i.....** of UK businesses are paid on average 24.67 days after agreed terms. *(a list of goods sent or services provided, with a statement of the sum due for these)*

C. Writing (12 points)

Write the covering message that would accompany your CV based on the job for a Client Services Executive on pages 3 & 4. The job was advertised in The Guardian, and Give a Grad a Go is a recruitment agency. Assume that you will complete your degree in 2017. Otherwise do not invent qualifications or experience that you have not had. The mode of the message would be digital, with a maximum of 4000 characters (about 1 hand-written page).

If Portuguese is not your native language, replace the word Portuguese with your native language. E.g. a Client Services Executive – Slovenian speaking

Your text 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? Write your answers on the exam paper. (0.4 points each)

1. This (line 3)
2. This (line 7)
3. this (line 16)
4. they (line 26)
5. them (line 40)

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 describe the latest trends in hiring new staff. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. The writer considers staff induction programmes important. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. A mentor is often involved in onboarding programmes. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. One of the purposes of onboarding is to retrain employees. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. One of the purposes of onboarding is to make new employees feel part of the company. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. According to the text good onboarding programmes can lead to higher staff turnover. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. Onboarding always combines fun rituals with practical elements. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13. According to the article all new employees need to go through the same onboarding process. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

C. Writing

Client Services Executive – Portuguese Speaker	
	Ref 178-1013 Contact Grace Brodie Industry Technology Job function IT Job level Graduate Hours Full time Contract Permanent Listing type Job vacancy Education level Undergraduate degree (or equivalent)
	Recruiter GIVEAGRADAGO LTD Location London Salary £22k - 26k per year Posted 09 Jan 2017 Closes 08 Feb 2017

Company Profile:

Experts in their trade, this award-winning software business is revolutionizing the world of independent travel and tourism. They have created a game-changing online booking app that offers independent accommodation providers a sophisticated technology and serviced solution that was previously only enjoyed by much bigger hotel groups.

Their ever-expanding portfolio of clients twinned with recent success has led them to launch a number of new global offices. Their lively, creative headquarters in London are set to grow rapidly, so much so they are now searching for confident Portuguese Speaking Client Service Executives to join their experienced client advisory team and manage the relationships with all clients within the Portuguese market.

The Role:

Do you love travelling? Are you a natural at dealing with people and relish wracking your brains to swiftly solve business problems? If you answered 'yes' to the above and are either a native speaker, or have a native command of Portuguese as well as prior experience of working with Portuguese clients, then this Portuguese Client Services opportunity could be the right role for you!

As a Client Services Executive you'll be in charge of managing the relationships with all clients that are anchored within Portugal and ensuring that they are getting the very best out of your company's innovative suite of services.

Key Responsibilities:

As the new Portuguese Speaking Client Services Executive, your responsibilities will include:

- Providing best-in class support to your network of independent accommodation providers in Portugal & ensuring they have a clear understanding of the array of services available
- Handling tech and general usage concerns; you must be able to simplify tricky tech terms with ease
- Delivering multi-channel support over the telephone, using live chat or web portal methods
- Spotting issue trends and reporting these where appropriate to your management team - this is a solutions-led working environment so if you can spot an opportunity to improve a process, then do share it!

What we're looking for?

- Native or fluency in Portuguese is an absolutely must (all applicants that do not have this will be discounted immediately)
- Exceptional communication skills, both written and verbal
- A great rapport with people
- Experience of being able to keep calm and prioritise when under pressure
- Strong academic track record
- Genuine interest in the world of independent travel and tourism
- An appreciation for new technology and how this can improve the world of travel
- Tech or helpdesk experience is advantageous but not essential as full training will be provided
- With clients all over the world, this company is switched on 24 hours a day. While you won't be expected to develop a supernatural ability to stay awake, you'll need to be happy with working shifts (latest finish is 10pm), which could include weekends

What else is there to know?

- You'll be working in beautiful open plan offices in Kings Cross, London
- You'll be joining a hugely successful business that has retained its vibrant start-up feel - your colleagues are super smart, work hard, but enjoy a busy social calendar too!
- Your first month will be focused on taking you through a best-in-class training & on-boarding programme, so there's plenty of room for professional development

If you're a recent graduate eagerly seeking a career within the fascinating world of travel technology, then this Portuguese Speaking Client Services Executive opportunity could be the perfect next step for you. Don't miss out and apply today!

Answers

A. Reading comprehension

Reference, substitution & ellipsis (0.4 points each)

1. the package called DHL in a Box
2. the contact that DHL has with its new staff before they show up for work: i.e. the contract, DHL in a Box and the courier's welcome
3. companies not giving the joining process enough thought
4. the new employees
5. the new employees

True / false (0.5 points each)

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

B. Vocabulary (0.4 points each)

1. syndicated data
2. to get the sack
3. perks
4. focus group
5. invoices

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 Brodie" 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: 178 1013; Portuguese (or other language) Client Services Executive (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 travel;.