

SUGGESTED PRE-READING ACTIVITIES FOR READING TEXTS IN MODULE 3 (PRE-INTERMEDIATE MARKET LEADER COURSE BOOK – THIRD EDITION)

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1. Introduction

Reading comprehension is a key issue in learning English as a foreign language, and it is critical that teachers utilize pre-reading strategies in reading classes in order to lighten students' cognitive burden while reading. Therefore, designing pre-reading activities is absolutely an essential part of any reading lesson plan. However, that job is not simple at all, especially in UEH, where we teach Business English to students who hardly have any knowledge of the economic fields. Although there are available pre-reading activities in course book (Market Leader_third edition), they seem not always to work very well with our students.

Motivated by the need, this paper makes a humble effort to offer some of pre-reading activities to teach the texts in Module 3 (Unit 1,2,3,4 in Pre-Intermediate Market Leader course book (Third edition)). Hopefully, it may bring you some options or suggestions for your teaching.

2. Literature review

2.1. Reading

The term reading seems very common to everybody. Reading is usually considered a receptive process in which meaning is extracted from the discourse (Harmer, 2007). Over the time, the meaning of reading has changed. Readers play a very important role in reading and are seen as active participants who bring their own background knowledge in understanding the text. Since the late 1970s, reading has been an interactive process where readers find out the meaning of a text by both relying on the printed text and on the previously stored knowledge.

2.2. Pre-Reading Phase

Understanding a reading text results from a communicative process between readers and texts. Thus, readers usually try to match their knowledge (existing) or activate their schemata with the new information that they receive from the text. Rumelhart (1980) describes schemata (the plural of schema) as “the building block of cognition”. The stages of reading have been classified into (a) Pre-reading, (b) While-reading, and (c) Post-reading. There is a great importance of pre-reading phase since it prepares learners for the reading material they have been assigned. The “*OK open your books to page 73 and start reading*” approach is not an acceptable strategy. Teachers should motivate students with an attention-getter, preview the reading to entice students, and choose appropriate strategies to activate students’ prior-knowledge about the topic of the text.

Table 1: Pre-Reading Options

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Considerations</i>
<i>Pre-teach Vocabulary</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Assures knowledge of new terms</i> ■ <i>Terms and definitions can be placed on the chalkboard during in-class reading</i>
<i>Pre-teach Concepts</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Points students toward the key ideas</i> ■ <i>Can be particularly effective with a graphic organizer</i>
<i>Promote Objectives</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Focuses on what you want students to get out of the reading</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Questions are often used to focus on the expected outcomes</i>
<i>Promote Reading Strategies</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Can be used to highlight upcoming images that are part of the reading</i> ■ <i>Gives students a heads up to look for figurative, biased, covert, subtle, and emotional appeals</i>

2.3. Pre-reading activities

According to Tierney and Cunningham (1984), pre-reading activities act as a way to access the reader’s former knowledge and “provide a bridge between his knowledge and the text”. Tierney and Cunningham break up pre-reading activities into two parts: (i) teacher-centered and (ii) student-centered or peer interaction. Teacher-centered activities are one-way question/answer tasks. Student-centered activities are more apt to develop an independent behavior from the beginning. Pre-reading activities can also be defined as warm-up activities which engage students in the preparation for a reading task.

Williams (1984) gives the following reasons for using pre-reading activities:

- To stimulate interest in the text
- To give a reason for reading
- To prepare the reader for the language of the text

The choice of the type of pre-reading activities will depend greatly on the kind of the text to follow and the types of the learners who will be doing the task and the aim of the pre-reading task. Stoller (1994: 2-7) shows some of the pre-reading activities along with its definition and benefits in the following table:

Table 2: Pre-reading activities

Pre-reading Activity	Brief definition	Benefits
Semantic mapping	A graphical representation on a blackboard showing readers’ prior knowledge in the form of connected categories to a given concept.	It helps learners bring their prior knowledge to the surface
Study the layout of the reading passage	Pass quickly by: the text’s title, subtitles, headings and visual representation and guess what they hold as meanings	- It helps learners go in pre-reading the text’s content. - It prompts learners to ask questions which they will try to answer.
Skim for the main idea(s)	Readers are asked to read the first and last paragraphs of a text plus the first sentence in the remaining paragraphs in few minutes.	It helps learners to state the main idea(s) of the text they are about to read.
Scan for details	Readers are asked to search for specific information in the text.	It makes learners search for specific information.
Examine the visuals	Readers examine the charts, graphs or figures.	It helps readers to guess the text’s ideas
Present main ideas	The teacher informs readers about the article’s topic if they are unfamiliar with it	It directs readers towards the text’s key words and ideas.

3. Suggested pre-reading activities for Module 3 (Pre-intermediate Market Leader course book _ Third edition)

3.1. Reading text (Unit 1): BE AWARE OF YOUR ONLINE IMAGE

Activity 1: *Lead-in questions*

- Ask students to look at the names on the following phone screen



- Ask them to answer the questions:
 1. *What are they?*
 2. *Which ones do you use?*
 3. *Which ones help you to show yourself most? Why?*

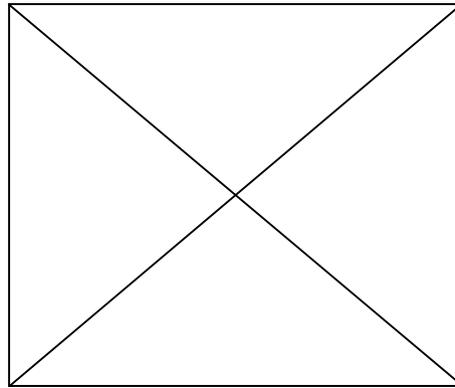
Activity 2: *Carousel of ideas*

This activity helps students find out what they already know about the topic and encourages them to share ideas about it before they read the text.

- Choose four topics related to the text that would be useful for students to think about before reading.

For examples:

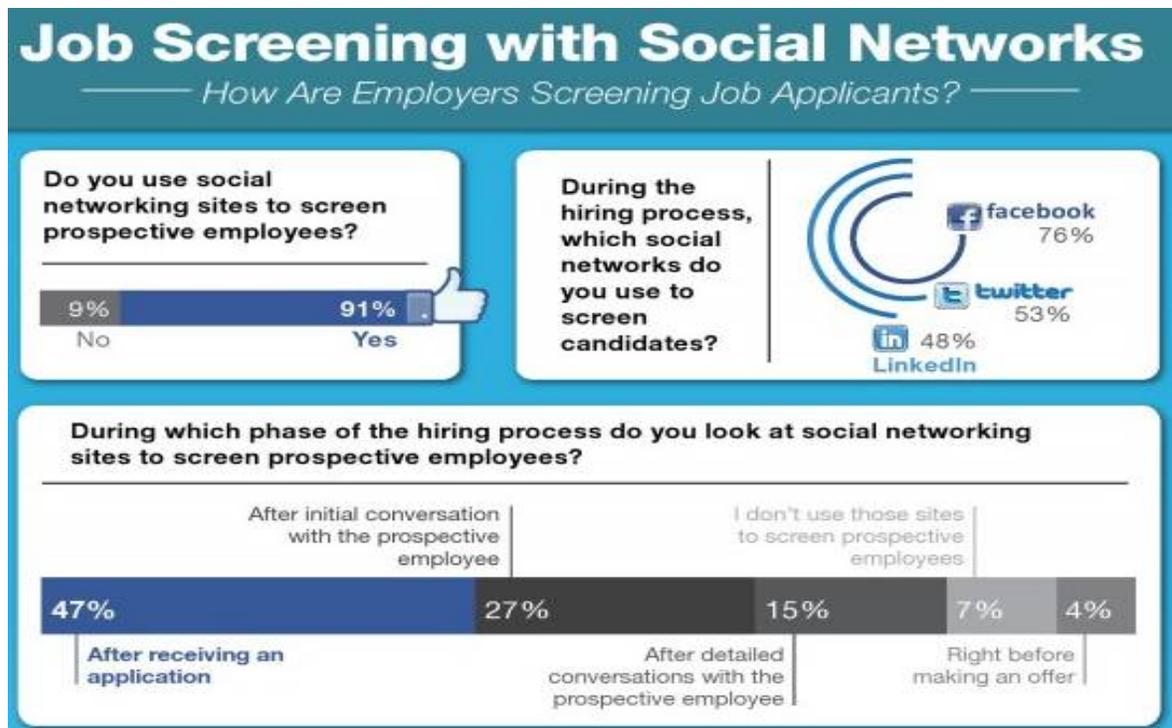
- (1) *What social networking sites do you know?*
 - (2) *What do people usually share in social networking sites?*
 - (3) *Should employers use social networking sites to screen prospective employees? Why and why not?*
 - (4) *State some bad online behaviors which may damage one's employment prospects.*
- Take large pieces of paper and divide it into four triangles by drawing diagonal lines from opposite corners. Write one of the topics in each of the triangles in the centre of the piece of paper.



- Arrange four- student groups sitting around the piece of paper and give them a time limit e.g. one minute. They write as many ideas as possible relating to the topic in their triangle. When the time's up, they rotate the piece of paper and have another minute. This time, they read the ideas already written down and add new ones to it. Repeat 2 more minutes until all students have written in each triangle. They then read all the ideas in each triangle.

Activity 3: Discussion

- Have students look at the result of a survey about how employers are screening job applicants.



- Ask students to work in groups and give predictions on results of the survey if it is conducted in Vietnam.

3.2. Reading text (Unit 2): TWO DIFFERENT ORGANISATIONS

Activity 1: Discussion

The reading part of Unit 2 includes two articles: (1) *India: Tata's search for a new CEO*; (2) *Is John Lewis the best company in Britain to work for?* However, there is only one pre-reading discussion question relating to Article 2. I suggest that there should be two questions concerning both the two topics.

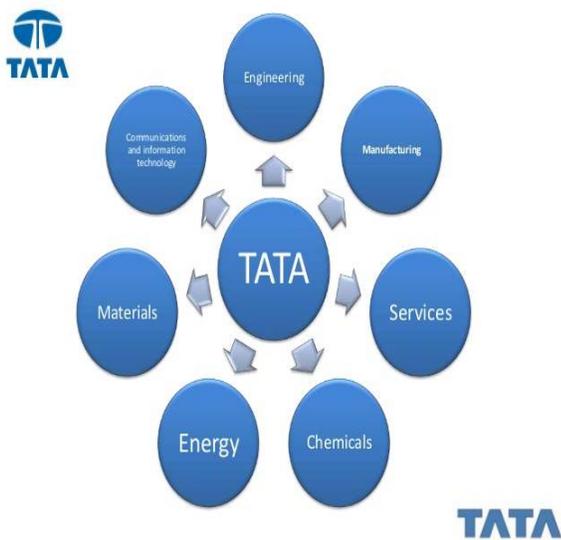
1. "Companies should be owned by their employees." Discuss.
2. Should family companies be managed by an outsider?

Activity 2: Read pictures

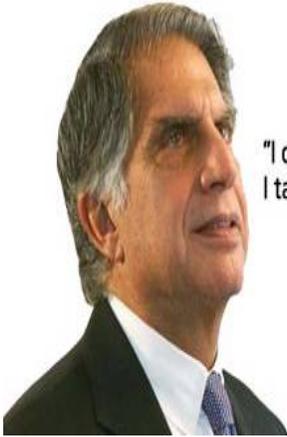
- Divide students into groups A and B. Groups A are going to read article (1). Groups B are going to read article (2).

Distribute the groups handouts on which there are the title of the article they are going to read and some pictures showing its main contents. Students are supposed to guess what the pictures refer to and what they might be reading from the article.

Handout_ Article 1



India: Tata's search for a new CEO



"I dont believe in taking right decisions..
I take decisions & then make them right

Sanjay J. Jata



Handout_Article 2



**Is John Lewis the best company
in Britain to work for?**





3.3. Reading text (Unit 3): SALES SKILLS

Activity 1: K-W-L activity

K-W-L is an instructional reading strategy that is used to guide students through a text. Students begin by brainstorming everything they **Know** about a topic. This information is recorded in the K column of a K-W-L chart. Students then generate a list of questions about what they **Want** to Know about the topic. These questions are listed in the W column of the chart. Later, during or after reading, students answer the questions that are in the W column. This new information that they have **Learned** is recorded in the L column of the K-W-L chart. Therefore, The K-W-L strategy serves several purposes: Elicits students' prior knowledge of the topic of the text; Sets a purpose for reading; Helps students to monitor their comprehension.

- Create a K-W-L chart. The teacher should create a chart on the blackboard or on a Powerpoint slide. In addition, the students should have their own chart on which they record information. (Below is an example of a K-W-L chart.)

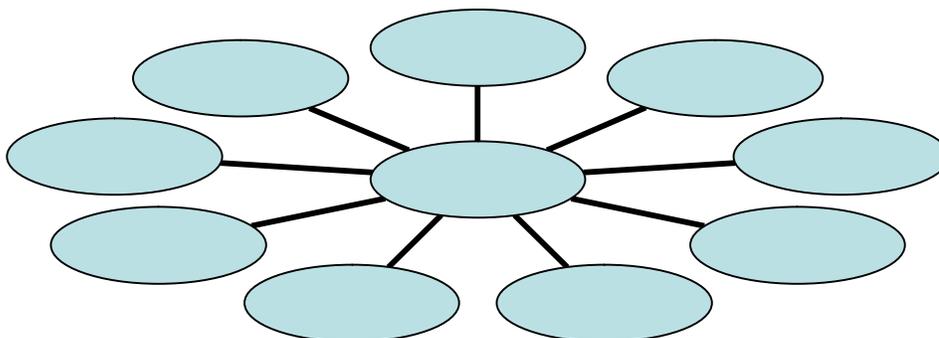
K	W	L

- Ask students to brainstorm about what they have known about the topic *Sales skills* (that could be words, phrases, terms or ideas associated with the topic depending on students' English proficiency level) and then record those associations in the K column of their chart.
- Ask students what they want to know about the topic and then have them write down their questions in W column.
- The L column will be done after students finish their reading.

Activity 2: Word game

Teachers select about 10 key words that most of the students know from the two articles in Unit 3. Through these words, students can be aware of the topics they are expected to read about and have some ideas in mind about the articles. Moreover, they can be motivated because the game is very fun and competitive most of the time.

- Create some kind of drawings on the blackboard that you fill the words in later.



- Divide students into 2 teams and ask them to appoint a representative for each.
- Explain the rules of the game to students: The two representatives are supposed to stand in front of the class facing their team and not allowed to look back the blackboard. Whenever teacher fills a word in, other members of both teams try to explain the word to their representative in English and body language. The representative who calls out the word first will get 1 point for his/her team.
- Lead students to do the game. Teacher should leave the central circle for the most important word/phrase such as *salesperson*, *sales skills*, and *survey*.

3.4. Reading text (Unit 4): GREAT IDEAS

Activity 1: Lead-in video of bizarre business ideas

- Show students a video “10 bizarre business ideas that make millions”
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WBe9lyv6U_g)



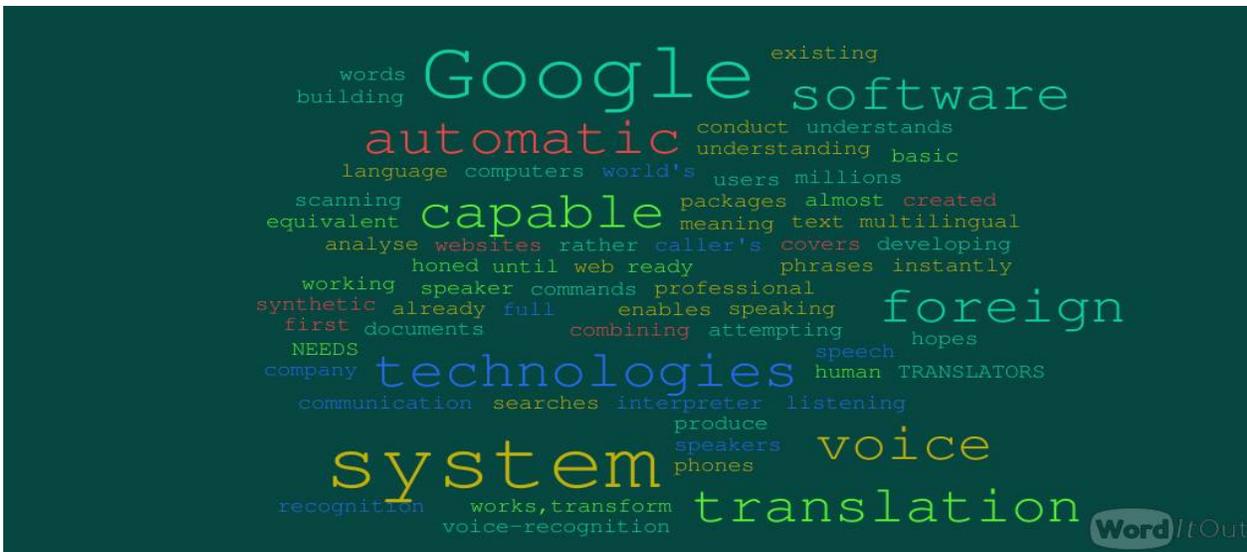
- Have them talk about the business ideas they find most impressive.
- Guide students to brainstorm about “What is a great idea?”

Activity 2: Word clouds

A word cloud is a visual representation of a text or a form of content map; it visually highlights the most often used words in the passage. There are a number of online free tools that will create word clouds including Wordle, TagCrowd, ToCloud, and Tag Cloud Generator. Using those tools, creating your own word clouds is actually pretty easy and can make wonderful displays relating to your reading.

In a pre-reading activity, you can engage students’ discussion of a word cloud to preview the vocabulary and make predictions about the content before reading the actual text.

I have created 3 word clouds corresponding to 3 texts in Unit 4. Students have an opportunity to have a look at the word cloud of the article they are supposed to read and discuss possible ideas they might read with their friends.



<http://worditout.com/word-cloud/1289039>



<http://worditout.com/word-cloud/1289055>



(<http://worditout.com/word-cloud/1289058>)

4. Conclusions:

In this paper, I have tried to offer some activities teachers can use in pre-reading stage. Depending on the time allowed, student's level and interest, you might choose to use or adapt them accordingly. Once again, I would like to emphasize that pre-reading step is crucial in reading teaching especially for students of low English proficiency levels. It helps to activate, motivate and prepare students before they go into the actual reading process.

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