

TEXTS TEST 1 EXAMPLE

Time allowed: 90 minutes

Read the text below carefully and answer all the questions that follow.

5 The UK is one of the top destinations for international students with non-EU students representing 48% of the UK postgraduate STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) courses. Nonetheless, both EU and non-EU student enrolments significantly dropped during 2013-2014. These falling numbers have been attributed to a range of factors: increasing global competition, the strict migration policy of the UK and emerging new markets such as China, Egypt and Japan. There is, however, another issue: whether international students are satisfied with the quality of their university experience while studying in the UK. Almost 24% of all the complaints received by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator during the last year were from international students, which should send some key messages to the sector.

10 UK higher education has discussed internationalisation and international student experience for over three decades. Universities have focussed on supporting international students and helping them to mix with home students. Nonetheless, there are signs that this approach is not working. Much of the research on international student experience has focussed on cultural differences or differences in learning styles between home and international students which has led to some misleading assumptions. Many academics, in fact, continue to believe that Asian students are not critical thinkers or that Chinese students will never speak up
15 in the classroom.

Rather than meeting the needs of the overseas students, universities are keen to help them be like the home students. Home students are therefore forced to mix with international students during group discussions and seminars. The strategy has failed however, since international students are not generally as chatty as home students. This may be due to a lack of proficiency in English or a lack of knowledge about the focus of the
20 discussions which are often centred on a British context. This has led to mutual misunderstandings rather than intercultural dialogue. In other words, international students believe that home students waste their time by dominating the discussions and home students assume that international students hinder their learning by keeping silent.

25 Universities need to change their perceptions about how students learn and why they have enrolled in tertiary education courses. Students today – whether home or international – have access to multiple ways of learning both physical and virtual. Many students are very smart users of modern technology and are well connected with the online world.

(389 words)

(Adapted from *Universities don't understand how international students learn*, Thushari Welikari, www.guardian.co.uk 3 July 2015)

1. Describe the structure of this text.

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2. Consider how lexis operates in the third paragraph.

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3. Beginning with the topic sentence below, develop the information it contains into a paragraph of 120 words.

Language students, for instance, are becoming increasingly aware of the possibilities provided by technology in helping them to learn a language.