



Candidate Instructions – Online Reading Comprehension Test – Short Version

You have been registered to take ALTA's Online Reading Comprehension Test (Short Version). This test is designed to assess your ability to understand what you read in a given language. The evaluation is done online with pre-selected passages and questions.

Please read all of these instructions before beginning your evaluation.

Here are some important things to remember when taking the test:

- ALTA's Reading Comprehension Test (Short Version) consist of 2 reading selections with a total of 10 multiple choice questions.
- You will have 30 minutes to complete the test. A timer in the corner of the screen will inform you how much time you have remaining, and you will be given a warning five minutes before the end of your test.
- It is important to take the test in a quiet area where you can concentrate fully on what you are reading.
- The questions target different areas of reading comprehension, and while you may be able to answer some questions by skimming the passage, other questions require reading for a high level of detail. In most cases, the answer to the question does not use wording directly from the passage. Many questions require you to look for an implied detail, or to draw a conclusion based on the ideas presented in the text.
- Each question has only one correct response. The correct answer to each question is contained in the text only. Do not refer to other knowledge that you may have about the subject.
- You are able to move backward and forward through the test, if you choose. That is, if you skip a question, you will be able to come back to it later.
- **You may not use reference materials of any kind on this test (dictionaries, electronic devices, external websites, etc.)**
- Once you have started your test, you may not stop it, start over, or take the test again. It is important that you complete your scheduled test in one sitting. If you close your browser window or otherwise log out of a test before you have completed the test, you will not be able to log back in to finish.



- You must click “Submit Test” when you have finished answering the questions on the final passage – otherwise, your test will not be scored.

Computer Requirements:

- PC with Windows 7 and above
- Mac with OS Sierra and above
- JavaScript (turned on)
- Broadband connection
- Supported Browsers: Firefox, Safari, Chrome, Microsoft Edge

Also, for languages with non-roman characters, character encoding needs to be set up at Unicode. It’s usually done per default. In case it’s not: in the Firefox task bar, go to view, to character encoding and make sure that Unicode (UTF-8) is selected.

(If “view” does not appear, go to web developer)

Taking the test:

To take the test, you will need to access ALTA’s online portal through the link in the email sent to you. If you have not taken an online test with ALTA before, you will be prompted to activate your account before getting started. Be sure to choose a password that you will remember later.

After registering, click the link for your assigned test. You must read and acknowledge the Honor Statement in order to take the test. Then, click “Start Test” in order to start your evaluation. Do not click “Start Test” until you are ready to begin, as the test cannot be stopped once started.

Tips for multiple choice tests:

- Read the passage quickly.
- Look at the questions.
- Answer the easy questions.
- Read the passage again.
- For difficult questions, eliminate options that are not correct.
- If 2 alternatives seem correct, compare them for differences, and then refer to the question to find your best answer.

A practice passage and three sample questions are below:



A sticker on Colgate toothbrush packages warns consumers: “Got a cold? Change your toothbrush.” According to the company’s website, “germs can hide in toothbrush bristles and lead to reinfection.” Competitor Arm & Hammer offers the same warning that toothbrushes should be replaced “anytime you’ve had a cold or have been ill, since germs may be lurking among the bristles.” Can a person really re-catch a cold from a toothbrush?

No, unless it’s someone else’s toothbrush (or someone else’s cold). Much like the admonition from shampoo companies to “lather, rinse, repeat,” the idea that a toothbrush must be replaced seems designed to sell more product. Once you’ve been infected with a particular strain of a virus, you develop antibodies that make the likelihood of re-infection very low. Even if the virus were still hanging out on your toothbrush after you recovered—colds and flus can survive there for anywhere from a few hours to three days—those antibodies should keep you from contracting the same illness twice. Your toothbrush is no more dangerous while you’re still sick, since the viral load on the bristles is negligible compared with what’s already in your system.

It is possible to re-infect yourself with bacteria, however. If you were afflicted with strep throat, for example, a colony of bacteria might end up on your toothbrush and remain there long enough to give you a second case after you’d taken a course of penicillin. But that threat might be mitigated by toothpaste, which sometimes contains antibacterial compounds. And, despite the claims of toothbrush manufacturers, this wouldn’t apply to a typical case of the (viral) sniffles.

1. The target audience for this article is:

- a. consumers concerned about the price of toothbrushes
- b. consumers who are severely affected by strep throat
- c. consumers concerned about germs being spread via toothbrush
- d. consumers who did not know that germs could be spread via toothbrush

2. What is the implied connection between toothbrush companies and shampoo companies?

- a. Their products contain antibacterial compounds.
- b. They are owned by several of the same corporations.
- c. They give directions that result in more sales of their products.
- d. They are concerned with how their products could cause infection.

3. How could a person catch a cold from using a toothbrush?

- a. by using a toothbrush for more than 3 months
- b. by using a the toothbrush of a friend who has a cold



- c. by using a toothbrush that is home to a bacteria colony
- d. by using the same toothbrush he used last time he had a cold

Turn to the next page to see the answers.



Question 1: The correct answer is **c**, “**consumers concerned about germs being spread via toothbrush.**” This question targets your understanding of the passage’s main idea. You may have been able to answer this question by only reading the first paragraph; however, to fully eliminate the other answers as being incorrect, it may have been necessary to read the other two paragraphs, as well.

Question 2: The correct answer is **c**, “**They give directions that result in more sales of their products.**” This question targets the understanding of several details in the second paragraph of the passage. Knowing the word “admonition” helps, but isn’t necessary for being able to select the correct answer.

Question 3: The correct answer is **b**, “**by using the toothbrush of a friend who has a cold.**” The answer to this question is in the first sentence of the second paragraph, but to be able to rule out the other answers, it’s necessary to read and understand all of the information in the third paragraph. Answer choice “c” looks attractive at first, but a close reading of the passage notes that a bacteria colony on a toothbrush can lead to a case of strep throat, not the cold that the question is asking about.

Prepare for your test:

For more information and practice tests, go to:

<https://www.altalang.com/language-testing/preparing-for-your-test/>