

Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)

Sample Reading Items

The following pages contain two samples of the kinds of items that appear in PISA reading assessments. These are provided to familiarize you and your students with the nature of the PISA assessment. A range of question types is used in PISA, including multiple choice, short answer, and long answer.

These sample items and the associated answer keys are available for public access on the following web page: <www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/assess/assess_program.html>. Scroll to the heading **Participation in national and international assessment**.

More examples are available in chapter 3 of *READING FOR CHANGE*, published by the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development and available for free download at <www.pisa.oecd.org/dataoecd/43/54/33690904.pdf>.

Each item starts with text that provides information and sets the context. This is followed by a series of questions, each designed with a particular ‘intent’ with respect to the skill or knowledge the question addresses.

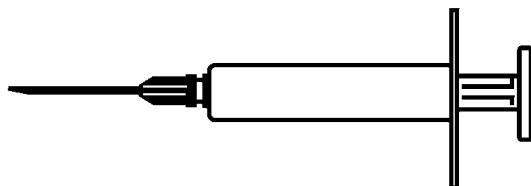
When PISA items are scored (i.e., a response code is assigned), markers follow the general principles, below.

- Spelling and grammar mistakes should be ignored unless they seriously obscure meaning. This is not a test of written expression.
- Responses are graded based on the degree to which students demonstrate an understanding of the text or topic in question.
- Code 0 is used for responses where there is any evidence that the student has made an unsuccessful attempt (vague, irrelevant) to answer the question.
- Code 9 is used for those cases where a student has apparently not attempted a question (left it blank).
- The other codes used denote “full credit,” “partial credit,” and “no credit” instead of “correct” and “incorrect” responses. This is because some questions do not have “correct” answers. Responses are graded based on the degree to which students demonstrate an understanding of the text or topic in question. “Full credit” responses do not necessarily include only fully correct or perfect responses.

SAMPLE PISA ITEM 1—ACOL Voluntary Flu Immunisation Program*

As you are no doubt aware the flu can strike rapidly and extensively during winter. It can leave its victims ill for weeks.

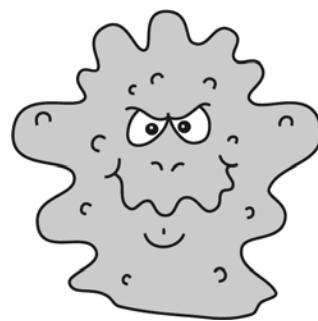
The best way to fight the virus is to have a fit and healthy body. Daily exercise and a diet including plenty of fruit and vegetables are highly recommended to assist the immune system to fight this invading virus.



ACOL has decided to offer staff the opportunity to be immunised against the flu as an additional way to prevent this insidious virus from spreading amongst us. ACOL has arranged for a nurse to administer the immunisations at ACOL, during a half-day session in work hours in the week of November 17. This program is free and available to all members of staff.

Participation is voluntary. Staff taking up the option will be asked to sign a consent form indicating that they do not have any allergies, and that they understand they may experience minor side effects.

Medical advice indicates that the immunisation does not produce influenza. However, it may cause some side effects such as fatigue, mild fever, and tenderness of the arm.



* Source: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). *Take the Test: Sample Questions from OECD's PISA Assessments*. OECD, 2009. 19–21. Available online at <www.oecd.org/dataoecd/47/23/41943106.pdf>. 27 Mar. 2009. Adapted with permission for a Canadian audience.

WHO SHOULD BE IMMUNISED?

Anyone interested in being protected against the virus.

This immunisation is especially recommended for people over the age of 65. But regardless of age, ANYONE who has a chronic debilitating disease, especially cardiac, pulmonary, bronchial, or diabetic conditions.

In an office environment ALL staff are at risk of catching the flu.

WHO SHOULD NOT BE IMMUNISED?

Individuals hypersensitive to eggs, people suffering from an acute feverish illness, and pregnant women.

Check with your doctor if you are taking any medication or have had a previous reaction to a flu injection.



If you would like to be immunised in the week of November 17, please advise the personnel officer, Fiona McSweeney, by Friday, November 3. The date and time will be set according to the availability of the nurse, the number of participants, and the time convenient for most staff. If you would like to be immunised for this winter but cannot attend at the arranged time please let Fiona know. An alternative session may be arranged if there are sufficient numbers.

For further information please contact Fiona on ext. 5577.

*Enjoy
Good Health !*

Fiona McSweeney, the personnel officer at a company called ACOL, prepared the information sheet on the previous two pages for ACOL staff. Refer to the information sheet to answer the questions which follow.

Question 1: FLU

Which one of the following describes a feature of the ACOL flu immunisation program?

- A Daily exercise classes will be run during the winter.
 - B Immunisations will be given during working hours.
 - C A small bonus will be offered to participants.
 - D A doctor will give the injections.

Question 2: FLU

We can talk about the **content** of a piece of writing (what it says).

We can talk about its **style** (the way it is presented).

Fiona wanted the **style** of this information sheet to be friendly and encouraging.

Do you think she succeeded?

Explain your answer by referring in detail to the layout, style of writing, pictures, or other graphics.

Question 3: FLU

This information sheet suggests that if you want to protect yourself against the flu virus, a flu injection is

- A more effective than exercise and a healthy diet, but more risky.
 - B a good idea, but not a substitute for exercise and a healthy diet.
 - C as effective as exercise and a healthy diet, and less troublesome.
 - D not worth considering if you have plenty of exercise and a healthy diet.

Question 4: FLU

Part of the information sheet says:

WHO SHOULD BE IMMUNISED?

Anyone interested in being protected against the virus.

After Fiona had circulated the information sheet, a colleague told her that she should have left out the words "Anyone interested in being protected against the virus" because they were misleading.

Do you agree that these words are misleading and should have been left out?

Explain your answer.

Question 5: FLU

According to the information sheet which one of these staff members should contact Fiona?

- A Steve from the store, who does not want to be immunised because he would rather rely on his natural immunity.
- B Julie from sales, who wants to know if the immunisation program is compulsory.
- C Alice from the mailroom who would like to be immunised this winter but is having a baby in two months.
- D Michael from accounts who would like to be immunised but will be on leave in the week of November 17.

SAMPLE PISA ITEM 2—WARRANTY*

Text 1

Camera Shots Video House 89 ELIZABETH STREET Victoria, British Columbia B1B 2A3 PHONE: 555-1313 FAX: 555-1313 http://www.camerashots.com .		CAMERA SHOTS VIDEO HOUSE 89 ELIZABETH STREET Victoria, British Columbia B1B 2A3 555-1313											
CUSTOMER SARAH BROWN 151 GLENLYON STREET VICTORIA, BRITISH COLUMBIA B1B 2A4		<table border="1"><tr><td>INVOICE 26802</td><td>DATE 18/10/99</td><td>TIME 12:10</td></tr><tr><td>ACCOUNT 195927</td><td>SALES 24 RAY</td><td>REG. 16</td></tr></table>						INVOICE 26802	DATE 18/10/99	TIME 12:10	ACCOUNT 195927	SALES 24 RAY	REG. 16
INVOICE 26802	DATE 18/10/99	TIME 12:10											
ACCOUNT 195927	SALES 24 RAY	REG. 16											
PRODU	DESCRIPTION	SERIAL No	LIST	QTY	NET	TOTAL	EX.						
150214	ROLLY FOTONEX 250 ZOOM	30910963		1	249.08	249.08	X						
33844	TRIPOD			1	5.66	5.66	X						
					Sub-Total	254.74							
Transaction Amount . . . Visa/Bank Card \$254.74		Change			Total	254.74							
Thank you for your business.													

* Source: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). *Take the Test: Sample Questions from OECD's PISA Assessments*. OECD, 2009. 46–48. Available online at <www.oecd.org/dataoecd/47/23/41943106.pdf>. 27 Mar. 2009. Adapted with permission for a Canadian audience.

On the previous page is the receipt that Sarah received when she bought her new camera. Below is the warranty card for the camera. Use these documents to answer the questions which follow.

Text 2

ONE YEAR WARRANTY: (Private Users)	
VALID ONLY IN CANADA	
VIDEO HOUSE & COMPANY PTY LTD—ACN 008 458 884 ('VIDEO HOUSE') warrants to the initial owner that the camera is free of any defects in material or workmanship. This warranty is not transferable. Video House will service, repair, or replace at its election, and free of charge, any part which is found upon inspection by Video House to be defective in material or workmanship during the warranty period(s).	
PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY	
NO. M 409668	
Camera—Model:
Serial No:	SARAH BROWN
Name of Owner:	151 GLENLYON ROAD
Address:	VICTORIA, BRITISH COLUMBIA
	BIB 2A4
Date Purchased:
Purchase Price:

Rubber Stamp of Dealer

PLEASE NOTE:
Post Immediately—Postage Stamp Necessary
This warranty card should be completed and returned to Video House within 10 days of purchase.
International Warranty Card issued on request.

Question 1: WARRANTY

Use the details on the receipt to complete the warranty card [above].

The name and address of the owner have already been filled in.

Question 2: WARRANTY

How long does Sarah have, to return the warranty card?

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Question 3: WARRANTY

What else did Sarah buy while she was in the store?

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Question 4: WARRANTY

The words “Thank you for your business” are printed on the bottom of the receipt. One possible reason for this is simply to be polite. What is another possible reason?

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