INTERPRETIVE READING EXAMPLES

WRITING AND PRODUCING INTERPRETIVE READING (IR) TASKS

Creating an Interpretive Reading task starts with knowing several key things: the level of reading passage (Novice, Intermediate, Advanced), the topic and the kind of reading passage you want to design (narrative, informative, opinion piece, instructions, etc.). You will also need to decide if you want the questions in the students' native language or the target language they are learning. (There are valid arguments for both approaches.) It also helps to have your question(s) in mind first, especially the type of question: straightforward content understanding, a why question, compare/contrast, prediction, opinion, inference, sequencing, etc.

You may create a reading passage of any length and as many questions as you want. The passage and questions will be together in the same prompt. The student will have a separate text box on the same page to write the answer(s). You can create multiple prompt boxes for one topic.

On the next page you will find some samples that are representative of the language that the teacher might write and assign to students. Note that each is accompanied by the various attributes that you will be asked to provide as you create content.

📄 Sample 1

Name: Family

Description: You have a penpal and she writes to you about her family. Read her letter and answer her questions.

Language: English

Level: Novice

Topic: Personal and Family Life

Standard: Communications and Cultures

Gender: NA

Keywords: family, activities, letter

Prompt 1

Instructions

You have a penpal and she writes to you about her family. In each prompt, read what she wrote and answer the question. Write your response in the text box provided. You will be assessed for your understanding of the reading passage, so be as complete as possible.

Reading Passage

I have a big family. I live with my parents, my two older brothers and my younger sister. I also have many aunts and uncles who live in my town. My grandparents live far away in another state.

Questions

Who is in her family? Who lives close? Who lives far away?

Prompt 2

In my house, we like to spend time together. In the evenings we eat dinner at the table. After we clean up from dinner, we often play a game together. We always read before bed. On the weekends we like to do activities outside.

Question

What does the family do in the evening? When do you think the family goes to the park?

Prompt 3

In my family we all play a musical instrument. We have a lot of fun practicing together every day. Sometimes we even write songs and play them for friends. They love it and we all laugh a lot.

True or false?

They do not enjoy playing music.

Prompt 4

Upload a photo of family playing basketball.

This is my family playing soccer.

True or False?

Prompt 5

Sometimes we visit my grandparents. Every time we go, my grandfather bakes cookies with me. He loves to cook with me. He never gets angry with me, even when I break something. He shows me what to do and teaches me. While we cook we talk and laugh a lot!

Question

Which answer best describes the grandfather? (Choose one answer and write that answer in the text box.)

a) mean and angry

b) kind and loving

c) sad and unfriendly

Guiding Goals for Sample 1

Novice IR Description: I can identify the general topic and some basic information in both very familiar and everyday contexts by recognizing practiced or memorized words, phrases, and simple sentences in texts that are written.			
I can….	Yes	With Help	Not Yet
I can understand the general topic about family and activities in this conversational text.			
I can understand some basic information about the people, what they do and how they are described.			
I can identify details in the writing about family, activities and descriptions of people.			

📄 Sample 2

Name: School Day

Description: You are starting a new school. Your teacher has given you information about your school day. Read the information and answer questions.

Language: English

Level: Novice

Topic: School Life

Standard: Communications and Cultures

Gender: NA

Keywords: school, classes, schedule

Prompt 1

Instructions

You are starting a new school. Your teacher has given you information about your school day. Each prompt has some information and a question about what you read. Write your response in the text box provided. You will be assessed for your understanding of the reading passage, so be as complete as possible.

Reading Passage

Welcome to our school! We are happy you are coming! On the first day of school we do not start regular classes. We talk about school rules and the schedule. We walk around the school to see all the classrooms.

Question

True or False? (Is the following statement true or false? Choose one and write your answer in the text box.)

On the first day of school you will start learning math, reading and science.

Prompt 2

After you are familiar with rules and the school building, we start the regular schedule the next day. School starts at 8:30. Your first class is math. Then you have reading and writing. Then your class has a break when you can go outside to the playground. Next you have music. Following music is lunch. Science is after lunch and your last class is history.

Question

Make a list of your classes. List them in the order they happen.

Prompt 3

I want to tell you about lunch. Everyone eats lunch in the cafeteria. Some students bring their own lunch. Other students prefer to buy lunch. If you buy lunch, there are always 3 different meals they sell.

Which answer best describes lunch? (Choose one answer and write that answer in the text box.)

a) You must eat your own food from home.

b) You have to buy lunch.

c) You can eat your own food or buy lunch.

Prompt 4

Upload a photo of a photo of sports equipment.

These are the instruments you can choose to play for music class.

True or False (Write your answer in the text box.)

Prompt 5

I hope you like this school. The students will welcome you, talk to you and sit with you at lunch. They are very friendly and we don't have problems at our school with children being mean. Students often work together in class and help each other with schoolwork. You will soon have new friends. See you soon!

Question

Describe the children at the school. What are the students like?

Guiding Goals for Sample 2

Novice IR Description: I can identify the general topic and some basic information in both very familiar and everyday contexts by recognizing practiced or memorized words, phrases, and simple sentences in texts that are written.			
I can....	Yes	With Help	Not Yet
I can understand the general topic about school in this informational text.			
I can understand basic information such as classes, lunch and student descriptions.			
I can identify details in the text about school, classes and students.			

📄 Sample 3

Name: Travel

Description: You are planning a trip to San Francisco and you have a travel app on your cell phone with lots of information about visiting this city. Read the app and answer questions.

Language: English

Level: Intermediate

Topic: Personal and Family Life

Standard: Communications and Cultures

Gender: NA

Keywords: travel, city, visit, tourism

Prompt 1

Instructions

You are planning a trip to San Francisco and you have a travel app on your cell phone with lots of information about visiting this city. Each prompt has a passage about traveling there and a question about what you read. Write your response in the text box provided. You will be assessed for your understanding of the reading passage, so be as complete as possible.

Reading Passage

San Francisco is an exciting city to visit. Located on the West Coast, between the ocean and a large bay, it offers endless activities for people of all ages. A wonderful way to get acquainted with the city and its neighborhoods is to take a tour on one of the many buses that go around the city. You will see many famous landmarks and sights that tourists love to visit.

Question

What is a good way to become familiar with the layout of the city? Why does the app recommend that?

Prompt 2

Once you are familiar with the city, you can visit one of many landmarks. Most tourists enjoy going to Fisherman's Wharf at the edge of the Bay. From a very short distance you can see the sea lions that lie on the docks. Be prepared for lots of noise as they bark non-stop! You can even visit the nearby gift shop, where every purchase made supports the sea lion colony preservation. Maybe you can bring home a stuffed animal and feel good about contributing to a worthy cause.

Question

How can you help the sea lions?

Prompt 3

From Fisherman's Wharf, most folks like to ride the cable car. This is a historic form of transportation that still runs up and over the steep hills of the city. The ride starts right near the docks. Once you get on the cable car, you can buy a one way ticket or an all day pass from the conductor. Then, find a good spot to enjoy the ride, preferably a spot where you can lean out and take photos of all the views.

Question

Explain how a person can take a cable car ride.

Prompt 4

There are many famous spots to get off the cable car. The first popular one is Lombard Street, known worldwide for being extremely steep and curvy. You can get off at that stop, walk down and back up on the sidewalk next to this short street. Be prepared to take many photos of this picturesque street that is built with cobblestones, lined with flowers and bordered by historic, colorful houses.

Question

What does Lombard Street look like? Describe it with as many details as you can from the reading passage.

Prompt 5

After Lombard Street, you can get back on the cable car with your ticket and there are many more places you can stop to see famous sights. You might enjoy wandering in Chinatown, eating pasta in Little Italy or shopping around Union Square. Most visitors like to have a full day for the cable car ride, so it's suggested to start early in the morning.

Question

What recommendation does the app make? Why does it make this recommendation?

Guiding Goals for Sample 3

Intermediate IR Description: I can understand the main idea and some pieces of information on familiar topics from sentences and series of connected sentences within texts that are written.			
I can….	Yes	With Help	Not Yet
I can understand the main idea and information in the travel app.			
I can understand and identify details in informational text.			
I can understand and identify recommendations.			
I can understand and explain instructions.			
I can understand a descriptive passage and provide those details.			

📄 Sample 4

Name: Party

Description: You received an email from a friend about her upcoming birthday party. Read her email and answer questions.

Language: English

Level: Intermediate

Topic: Social Life

Standard: Communications and Cultures

Gender: NA

Keywords: party, invitation, birthday, email, celebration

Prompt 1

Instructions

You received an email from a friend about her upcoming birthday party. Each prompt has a passage about the party and a question about what you read. Write your response in the text box provided. You will be assessed for your understanding of the reading passage, so be as complete as possible.

Reading Passage

Hi! I'm so excited to invite you to my birthday party! After considering a lot of different places like the public pool, the climbing gym and a restaurant, I decided to have my party at the local park. At those other places we are not able to run around and be loud, but at the park we are free to do whatever we want.

Question

Why does your friend prefer a party at the park?

Prompt 2

Please arrive at the party by two o'clock and make arrangements to leave at four. This gives us enough time to have some fun, eat some cake and play some games I'm planning. Also, we can just run around, climb on the playground equipment and maybe do the scavenger hunt I'm making.

Question

Which activities does your friend have to prepare in advance, before the party?

Prompt 3

Please do not bring any gifts. I am trying to reduce how much stuff I have. However, if you really want to give me a present, please make a donation to an organization you really like, and then tell me about that program, what they do and why you are choosing it.

Question

What does your friend want for her birthday?

Prompt 4

I look forward to seeing you! The party is this Saturday. Let's meet at the picnic tables by the playground. Please let me know if you can come. Also, do you have any allergies? What kinds of food are you not able to eat? I'll have cake, ice cream, snacks and drinks and I want to make sure I have something for everyone.

Question

In your email response to your friend's party invitation, what do you need to let her know?

Guiding Goals for Sample 4

Intermediate IR Description: I can understand the main idea and some pieces of information on familiar topics from sentences and series of connected sentences within texts that are written.			
I can....	Yes	With Help	Not Yet
I can understand the main information in a personal invitation.			
I can understand and identify details in the conversational text.			
I can understand a preference.			
I can understand what is asked for, (referencing the birthday present).			
I can understand questions asking for information.			

📄 Sample 5

Name: Scientific Article

Description: Read an article about scientists studying wildlife populations in urban areas and answer questions.

Language: English

Level: Advanced

Topic: Science & Technology

Standard: Communications and Cultures

Gender: NA

Keywords: science, article, research

Prompt 1

Instructions

In science class, you are asked to read an article about animal populations in urban areas. Each prompt has a passage from the article and a question about what you read. Write your response in the text box provided. You will be assessed for your understanding of the reading passage, so be as complete as possible.

Reading Passage

Yesterday, scientists made a groundbreaking discovery in the metropolitan area of Denver, Colorado. Ari Peterson, a wildlife biologist from the Rocky Mountain Research Lab, came to the city to study the recent phenomenon of more wildlife, especially mammals, moving into urban areas as their natural habitat decreases. He was shocked by what he found. "Over 50 red foxes are living within the city limits," he reported.   "Two years ago there were only 22 in the same area. We never expected to find so many so now we have focused our study on the red fox."

Question

Why did the scientist travel to Denver? Why is he studying the red fox?

Prompt 2

With a team of three graduate students, Peterson covered one hundred square miles of the city, focusing their search in the urban center. First they located areas that were more likely to have foxes; wooded areas, water sources, places with dens or places with tracks. To then locate individual foxes, they set live traps which do not harm the animal. When a fox was trapped, they tranquilized it, took lots of measurements, recorded observations and attached a GPS tracking device to the animal's ear. The device will automatically send data each day to the scientists' software program back at the research lab.

Question

What was the scientists' method for finding and studying the foxes? Explain.

Prompt 3

Peterson receives grant money from the federal government to study the increase of certain wildlife in urban areas. He explains it's important to study the changing populations of animals in cities. Most populations are decreasing as more and more habitat is destroyed and developed and as the human population increases. "We need to study these unique animal populations that are moving back into the cites so we can better understand how they are adapting to live in urban areas. The research will also help us understand how we can share the space safely with the wildlife." Taxpayers are complaining that it's a waste of government funds. They feel the money would be better spent studying climate change.

Question

Compare and contrast Peterson's opinion with the general opinion of the public.

Prompt 4

This is not the first time Peterson and his team have studied animals moving into urban areas. Five years ago he published a paper about coyotes repopulating the corridor along the Ohio River in densely populated neighborhoods. Over a timespan of twenty years he collected data on the packs living in that area. The study's results, published in a scientific journal, determined that the coyotes' population steadily increased until the area reached a maximum number of animals it could sustain. The animals successfully adapted by learning where to hunt, where to find water and how to avoid humans.

Question

Based on Peterson's previous research, what do you think will happen with the foxes in Denver in the future?

Guiding Goals for Sample 5

Advanced IR Description: I can understand the main message and supporting details on a wide variety of familiar and general interest topics across various time frames from complex, organized texts that are written.

Guiding Goals

I can....	Yes	With Help	Not Yet
I can understand the main message of the informational text.			
I can understand and identify the details in the scientific article.			
I can understand an informational text narrating across time frames.			
I can understand two different opinions on a complex topic.			
I can make a prediction based on my understanding of the article.			

Sample 6

Name: Adventure Blog

Description: You find a blog online about someone's backpacking adventure in Alaska. Read the blog entries and answer questions.

Language: English

Level: Advanced

Topic: Personal & Family Life

Standard: Communications and Cultures

Gender: NA

Keywords: travel, adventure, blog,

Prompt 1

Instructions

You find a blog online about someone's trip to Alaska. Each prompt has a blog entry and a question about what you read. Write your response in the text box provided. You will be assessed for your understanding of the reading passage, so be as complete as possible.

Reading Passage

At home, in Missouri, I had visions of easily hiking through the Alaskan tundra, watching a bear dig up roots on a distant hillside and gazing at the northern lights through the tent's screen while I peacefully slept. On the first morning, we set out and within thirty minutes we were lost. Without any trails to follow, this was a true wilderness experience and we did not take time to read the map, so we got lost. Mid-day we had to cross a knee-deep river without a bridge. Halfway across we fell down and everything in our backpacks got completely wet! Finally we found a good tent spot, dried out and started dinner. We were too tired and miserable to cook our dinner 100 feet away from our tent like the rules require, so that night a bear kept us awake for hours as it investigated the smells left behind from our dinner.

Question

How was the writer's first day different from her expectations?

Prompt 2

When we woke up the next day, we discovered a blueberry patch nearby so we picked blueberries and added them to our delicious pancakes. The sunny skies and views of the mountains made the breakfast even more perfect! With our equipment all dried out, we packed up and headed out. First, we carefully read the map and selected a route. It worked! We didn't get lost. Although we were taking a different route back to our car, it still required a river

crossing. This time we asked some other hikers for a good strategy for crossing a river and we successfully made it across without falling. We even saw a moose off in the distance right before we safely made it to the car.

Question

Compare the first day and the second day. How were they similar? How were they different?

Prompt 3

Well, this trip definitely improved on the second day. I can't say I can blame anyone else but myself for that first day. If I had taken my time and read the map, we would not have gotten lost. If I had paid attention to that educational video about backpacking in Alaska, we would have known how to cross a river. Finally, if I had followed the rules, we would have slept without being terrified of that bear. Maybe I don't actually know everything there is to know about backpacking in the wilderness. This is not Missouri.

Question

How did this trip cause the author to grow and change?

Prompt 4

Did I mention that I carried a sixty pound pack over all that trail-less wilderness and across rivers? I never used the extra pants and shirt I packed. One bottle of fuel would have been enough for one night, instead of two bottles, and I definitely didn't need the wildlife guidebook. Hiking cross-country without a trail is much more strenuous and it would have been nice to have less weight. Maybe I should have read that information the National Park mailed me before the trip.

Question

Based on the author's blog entry, what do you think she would recommend?

Guiding Goals for Sample 6

Advanced IR Description: I can understand the main message and supporting details on a wide variety of familiar and general interest topics across various time frames from complex, organized texts that are written.			
I can….	Yes	With Help	Not Yet
I can understand the main message of the conversational text.			
I can understand and identify the details in the adventure blog.			
I can understand a conversational text narrating across time frames.			
I can understand and identify the similarities and differences between two concrete ideas: the first and second days.			
I can understand and identify the similarities and differences between an abstract idea (writer's expectations) and a concrete idea (the writer's first day).			
I can analyze the information to understand how the author grew.			
I can make an inference based on the text.			

Once you are satisfied with the content you've created, you would then use production tools included within the Communication Builder to produce the task.