



COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, THEOLOGY, HUMANITIES & EDUCATION

HUM2100: Intensive English II

Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary Development [PAPER 1]

END OF SECOND SEMESTER EXAMINATIONS

APRIL/MAY 2026

LECTURER: DR E. MVUNDURA

DURATION: 3 HOURS

INSTRUCTIONS

1. This paper has two (2) sections (Section A and Section B).
2. Answer **ALL QUESTIONS** in both sections.
3. Start each question on a new page in your booklet.
4. Do not repeat material.
5. Credit will be awarded for legible, logical, systematic and neat presentation.

SECTION A: READING COMPREHENSION [60 marks]

INSTRUCTIONS: Answer ALL questions

Reading and Thinking in the Digital University

In contemporary universities, students encounter academic texts not only in printed books but also across digital platforms, including online journals, institutional websites, and multimedia lectures. This digital environment offers access to a vast range of information, yet it also demands more advanced reading strategies. Instead of moving through a textbook page by page, students frequently skim, scan, and navigate hyperlinks while trying to maintain a coherent understanding of the material. To succeed, they must learn to distinguish reliable research from superficial content and to integrate ideas across different modes, from written articles to recorded lectures and visual infographics.

A central challenge in this environment is dealing with polysemy in academic language. Many key terms carry multiple related meanings that shift subtly from one discipline to another. For example, the word “model” may indicate a physical representation in engineering, a statistical structure in mathematics, or a theoretical framework in sociology. Without careful attention to context, students may misinterpret such words and misunderstand entire arguments. Critical readers therefore use contextual clues, surrounding terminology, and the writer’s purpose to identify which meaning is intended.

Digital reading also requires learners to move beyond simple comprehension towards deeper critical engagement. Rather than accepting information as neutral, they are encouraged to question who produced the text, whose perspectives are centred or excluded, and how evidence is selected or omitted. This involves evaluating the credibility of sources, identifying assumptions, and recognising persuasive techniques. For instance, a visually appealing infographic may rely on selective data to support a particular claim, while a peer-reviewed journal article is expected to follow explicit methodological standards.

Advanced vocabulary knowledge supports all these processes. Understanding common Greek and Latin roots helps students decode specialised terms across disciplines, while familiarity with academic collocations such as “pose a hypothesis,” “challenge an assumption,” and “draw a conclusion” enhances both writing and listening. Furthermore, synonym precision becomes crucial: choosing between verbs like “describe,” “argue,” “demonstrate,” or “imply” can change the strength and nuance of a claim. Effective academic communicators therefore avoid vague expressions such as “things” or “stuff” and instead use exact terminology that reflects their intended meaning.

Ultimately, digital academic literacy is not simply about reading on a screen. It is about integrating multiple strategies: selecting credible sources, resolving lexical ambiguity, tracking arguments across different media, and using precise vocabulary to respond. Students who develop these skills become more independent learners, capable of constructing informed, critical perspectives in a rapidly changing information landscape.

Question 1

[20 marks]

Fill in the blanks with appropriate words or short phrases from the passage.

a) The digital university environment requires students to use more advanced _____ strategies.

- b) Students must distinguish reliable research from _____ content.
- c) Polysemy refers to key terms that have multiple _____ meanings.
- d) Without attention to context, students may _____ academic terms and misunderstand arguments.
- e) Critical readers evaluate the _____ of sources and identify assumptions.
- f) Visually appealing infographics may rely on _____ data to support a claim.
- g) Understanding Greek and Latin roots helps students _____ specialised terms.
- h) Academic collocations such as “pose a hypothesis” and “draw a conclusion” increase academic _____.
- i) Using precise synonyms instead of vague words improves the _____ of a claim.
- j) Digital academic literacy integrates selecting credible sources, resolving ambiguity, and tracking _____ across media.

Question 2

[15 marks]

Answer the following questions in complete sentences.

- a) According to the passage, why does reading in digital environments require more advanced strategies than reading printed textbooks?
- b) How can polysemy cause misunderstandings in academic reading? Provide an example from the passage.
- c) What kinds of questions should a critical reader ask about digital texts and why?
- d) In what ways does advanced vocabulary knowledge support students in the digital university?
- e) How does the passage show that “digital academic literacy” is more than just “reading on a screen”?

Question 3

[15 marks]

- a) Find a synonym in the passage for each of the following words:
 - i. Challenge (as a noun)
 - ii. Subtle
 - iii. Exact
 - iv. Integrate
- b) Use the phrase *critical engagement* in an academic sentence.
- c) Identify two academic linking words or phrases from the passage (for example, “for instance,” “ultimately,” “rather than”) and explain how each one helps guide the reader’s understanding of the argument.

Question 4

- a) Write a **5 sentence summary** of the passage, focusing on how digital environments affect academic reading and vocabulary use.
- b) In **one additional sentence**, briefly state whether you think digital reading makes critical thinking easier or harder, and give one reason for your view.

SECTION B: VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT [40 marks]

INSTRUCTIONS: Answer **ALL** questions.

Question 5

[10 marks]

Define the following terms as they are used in academic reading and writing (not in everyday conversation). Support each definition with a short example phrase or sentence.

- a) Polysemy
- b) Contextual clue
- c) Collocation
- d) Credibility
- e) Synonym precision

Question 6

[10 marks]

For each sentence below, underline or highlight the polysemous word and then write **two different meanings** it can have in academic contexts. Use your own words.

- a) The model used in this study helped the researchers predict student performance.
- b) The term “culture” appears frequently in the article, but its meaning shifts between sections.
- c) The lecture stressed the importance of clear argument structure.
- d) The author presents a strong case for rethinking assessment.
- e) The results of the experiment support the central claim of the paper.

Question 7

[12 marks]

Complete each sentence with the most appropriate academic word or phrase from the list below. *infer, summarise, evaluate, interpret, differentiate, challenge*

- a) Before accepting the article’s conclusions, we must _____ the reliability of its data.
- b) From the pattern of examples, we can _____ that the author prefers qualitative methods.
- c) The teacher asked students to _____ the main argument in no more than three sentences.
- d) It is essential to _____ between descriptive and critical comments in your notes.
- e) The researcher uses statistics to _____ the meaning of the survey results.
- f) The article aims to _____ the assumption that online learning is always less effective.

Question 8

[8 marks]

Complete the table below by providing the **derivational forms** of each root (noun, adjective, verb). Then write **one sentence per row** using **any one** of the forms in an academic context.

Root	Noun Form	Adjective Form	Verb Form	Example Sentence (Academic Context)
Transmit				
Define				
Conclude				
Vary				

END OF PAPER
