



Aufgabensteller/in:
**Brandstetter, Järvenpää, Price,
Sinn**

UNicert® III: Cross-Cultural Business English Placement test

Name, Vorname:

Punkte: _____/30

Part I. Reading Comprehension (14 points total)

Tech firms offer bewildering free perks: but do they work? [abridged]

Charlie Taylor, *The Irish Times*, 4 September, 2015

1	The best things in life may be free, but are generous workplace perks enough to persuade you
2	to choose one company over another? That's certainly what the likes of Google, Facebook,
3	Netflix and Apple hope.
4	While most of us think we're doing pretty well if we're given a health-care package, access to a
5	coffee machine and gym membership, there are others who find themselves <u>inundated</u> with
6	freebies and fringe benefits that all help make life a little easier. From free food and regular "on-
7	the-house" visits from barbers and masseurs, to onsite childcare, concierge services and
8	generous parental leave and holidays, the list of goodies on offer seems to be endless. Indeed,
9	Facebook even announced that they would reimburse female employees up to \$20,000
10	(€17,560) for freezing their eggs.
11	With competition for talent at an extreme among tech firms, many have taken to offering a
12	dizzying array of tasty treats in order to win people over. The payoff, according to Google at
13	least, is lower <u>attrition</u> rates, higher employee satisfaction, increased innovation and
14	productivity, and fewer days out sick. Other industry sectors have taken note.
15	So there was something of a surprise then when Ryan Smith, co-founder and chief executive of
16	the US software firm Qualtrics, dared to suggest recently that giving away things for free might
17	not be as effective a recruitment tool as you'd imagine. Given that the company has a full-
18	service pub at its Dublin office, this might seem an odd thing to say.
19	Referring to a recent study carried out by Qualtrics however, he said that while his company
20	had joined others in trying to create workspaces that give employees a break from routine and
21	encourage interaction, on-site benefits are largely ineffective when it comes to winning hearts
22	and minds. That survey, which focused on recruiting, engaging and retaining so-called
23	"Millennials" (those born between the early 1980s and 2000s), showed that free food was
24	considered one of the least important elements of company culture.
25	"How do you manage Indiana Jones? Channel his energy and talents. Give him big problems
26	to solve and remove <u>obstacles</u> from his path. Make his work and experience worth sharing and
27	not just a job to be done. Mentor and do not micro manage," said Des Martin, head of growth
28	<u>EMEA</u> at Qualtrics in Dublin.
29	"An interesting finding from our study was that 64 per cent of Millennials would prefer to make
30	\$40,000 (€36,000) in a job they love than \$100,000 (€91,000) in a job they find boring. This
31	means that free food and perks are a small part of company culture and the employee
32	experience. It is far more important to create an environment where Millennials feel supported
33	and challenged", he added.
34	Annette Clancy, a lecturer in organisational behaviour at UCD School of Business, also has her
35	doubts about the effectiveness of offering free stuff in order to attract and retain staff. "There is

36	a seduction value to things that are free but of course after a while even things that don't cost
37	anything become normalised and can seem like less of a perk," she said.
38	Clancy also questions the notion of what "free" really means in the context of employment.
39	"As we all know, nothing is ever really free. There's a dark side to it all involving manipulation
40	and guilt. Employees are encouraged to not leave the office and to stay late on campus
41	because everything is free and there's so much fun happening. The line between working and
42	home life can easily become blurred in this scenario, making people feel guilty about leaving,"
43	she added.
44	"Perks are the icing on the cake and that's all they are. You may want to join a company
45	because they have a fabulous social life, free sandwiches and so on but if career progression
46	isn't in place, if the salary isn't right, and if there's not a good management structure, then
47	perks are not going to be a substitute for that," she said.
	<p>Headline: bewildering = confusing</p> <p>Line 5: murky = Inundated = flooded, overwhelmed</p> <p>Line 13: attrition = movement of workers, labour outflow</p> <p>Line 26: obstacle= hindrance</p> <p>Line 28: EMEA = Europe, Middle East and Asia (or: Africa)</p>

1. Why are some companies going to such extremes when offering perks to their employees?
(4 points)

2. In how far does this strategy work with millennials? In how far does it not? (4 points)

3. Annette Clancy says that there is no such thing as a free gift. In how far does that hold true for Facebook's offer in ll. 9-10? Explain Facebook's hidden agenda. (3 points)

4. What perks would you find tempting and why? (3 points)

Part II: Grammar (16 points)

II.1 Tenses: (10 points)

Shortage of skilled workers in Germany

A shortage of skilled workers in Germany _____ (*mean*) that many bosses are younger than their teams. As more and more Germans retire, nowadays fewer and fewer young people _____ (*enter*) the workforce to replace them. The German Federal Employment Agency say that, as a share of the working population, the number of 15 to 24 year olds _____ (*fall*) by 10 percentage points since the 80s. And researchers predict that Germany's population _____ (*shrink*) even more.

This phenomenon might be affecting the bottom line. Researchers who conducted a study of German firms _____ (*find*) that a basket of performance measures declines by 5% for every 2 years that supervisors are younger than subordinates. They found that it's the age gap that _____ (*matter*), rather than absolute age.

Older workers who _____ (*work*) for their company for some time before their younger bosses were even hired, often _____ (*feel*) angry and fearful. To deal with this, for the last few years Daimler _____ (*promote*) age mixed teams to generate knowledge exchange. They hope that young managers _____ (*also benefit*) from the support of retired employees who are willing to help.

II.2 Passives (6 points)

Peter and Mary's boss, Mr Smith, is talking to them and the team. He is upset because Peter and Mary have made mistakes. Use the passive to avoid mentioning the persons and make what he says milder.

Mr Smith	
Peter has made some serious mistakes in the calculations. Mary did not notify us of the mistake in time. I will cut bonuses in the future should this occur again.	