

## Benefits of student work placements

AUDIO - open this URL to listen to the audio:

<https://goo.gl/cWGPjA>

### Questions 1-6

Choose the correct letter; **A, B or C.**

- 1 Why is Matthew considering a student work placement?
  - A He was informed about an interesting vacancy.
  - B He needs some extra income.
  - C He wants to try out a career option.
  
- 2 Which part of the application process did Linda find most interesting?
  - A The psychometric test.
  - B The group activity.
  - C The individual task.
  
- 3 During her work placement, Linda helped find ways to
  - A speed up car assembly.
  - B process waste materials.
  - C calculate the cost of design faults.
  
- 4 Why did Linda find her work placement tiring?
  - A She wasn't used to full-time work.
  - B The working hours were very long.
  - C She felt she had to prove her worth.
  
- 5 What did Linda's employers give her formal feedback on?
  - A engineering ability

B organisational skills

C team working

6 What was the main benefit of Linda's work placement?

A Improved academic skills.

B An offer of work.

C The opportunity to use new software.

### Questions 7-10

What does Linda think about the books on Matthew's reading list?

Choose **FOUR** answers from the box and write the correct letter, **A-F**, next to questions 7-10.

#### Books

7..... The Science of Materials

8..... Materials Engineering

9..... Engineering Basics

10..... **Evolution of Materials**

#### Opinions

A helpful illustrations

B easy to understand

C up-to-date

D comprehensive

E specialised

F useful case studies

**Solution:**

- |      |       |
|------|-------|
| 1. A | 6. B  |
| 2. B | 7. B  |
| 3. A | 8. A  |
| 4. C | 9. D  |
| 5. B | 10. C |

## **Audioscript:**

*You will hear two engineering students, a woman in her sixth year called Linda and a man in his fifth year called Matthew, discussing the benefits of student work placements.*

Hi Linda. Can you spare a few minutes?

Hello Matthew, no problem.

I just wanted to talk to you about temporary work placements ... I've never really thought there was a good reason for doing one. I've got some savings, so I don't really need the money at the moment. But I've had an email from the university about a vacancy that looks quite interesting. You did a placement last year didn't you?

I did, yes. In my case I wanted to find out if I was making the right career choice before I began applying for permanent jobs. I thought I wanted to work in car manufacturing but I wasn't sure. So I applied to Toyota.

What was the application process like?

Lengthy. There were a lot of different parts to it. The dullest one was a psychometric test - you know, when you have to answer loads of questions about yourself.

And you're trying to guess what's the best thing to say!

Yes. Then there was an activity that we did in groups, which I found really fascinating. Engineers are renowned for being a bit unsociable, but I thought we made a great team.

And we had an individual task too. We had to sort through various business documents and prioritise them. It was just like what you have to do as a student really, just with different content.

What exactly were you doing on the placement?

I was helping to design some diagnostic software to identify any waste in the car assembly process

Do you mean waste of materials?

No, time. Anything that can speed the process up helps to cut costs.

How did the work placement compare to being a student? Was it hard work?

Yes, it was. I'd had full-time work before - I've done various unskilled jobs during university holidays, and some of those involved long hours - so I thought I'd find it easy. I was wrong though. I think when you're on placement you're always trying to prove yourself ...

So you push yourself hard to succeed?

Yes. But I got a lot of support from my employers. They were always helpful. And then at the end of the placement I was given formal feedback.

Do you mean on your engineering ability?

Well, no, I didn't really need that because we had team meetings every other day, and so I had the chance to discuss technical issues and ask about anything that wasn't clear. The

evaluation was about general workplace things, like organisational ability, initiative ... That sort of thing ...

I get the impression you think you benefited from the placement ... ?

Well the best thing is that they've offered me a job for next year! Depending on my exam results of course, but still ...

A permanent one?

Yes! But apart from that I learned so much . The industrial environment was much more demanding than the academic one, so my general skills improved. Like time Management ... meeting deadlines ... And on the technical side I learned new software packages like MS Project.

Well, I think you've convinced me that work placements are worthwhile ... But while you're here can you give me advice on something else?

I'm about to make a start on the Engineering Materials module, and I've got a booklist here - can you have a quick look and tell me what you would recommend - that's if you can remember?

Let's see ... I do remember some of them ... Yes, this one ... The Science of Materials. I found the subject quite hard generally, but this book is very accessible so it suited me. It doesn't cover everything though ...

What about this one then . Materials Engineering?

Oh yes, I do remember that. But it's a bit out-of-date now isn't it, unless it's a new edition?

I don't think so ...

But what I liked about it were the pictures. They really helped to understand the descriptions. It's useful just from that point of view ... Let's see ... What else? Oh yes ... That one there - Engineering Basics - I think out of all these that's got the widest coverage ...

But I've looked at the contents page, and it hardly mentions nanotechnology.

Yes, you're right. The Evolution of Materials does though. It's a recent publication so it covers all the latest developments. It's a bit thin on the nineteen sixties though, and that decade was quite important.

Well it sounds as if they all complement each other in some ways. I don't suppose you can lend me .