

FCE Reading Part 6: How to Choose the Missing Sentences

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Learn how to fit sentences A-H into gaps 9-15 using reference words, linking expressions and paragraph logic. Includes an original practice task with explained answers.

You understand the article, but two missing sentences both seem possible. Which one belongs in the gap? In a gapped-text task, understanding the topic is only the beginning. You need to follow the connections between sentences.

In the FCE Reading Part 6 activity on EnglishExam.eu, the instruction is:

> Choose from the sentences A-H the one which fits each gap (9-15). There is one extra sentence which you do not need to use.

You must place seven sentences into seven gaps and leave one sentence unused. Each sentence can be used only once. Your aim is to rebuild a text that makes sense from beginning to end.

Exam-format note: EnglishExam.eu uses the official part number, Part 6, for this gapped-text activity. The practice task below is

adapted: it has seven gaps numbered 9-15 and eight options A-H. In the official Cambridge B2 First Reading and Use of English

paper, Part 6 has six gaps numbered 37-42 and seven options A-G. Official Part 2 is an open cloze. The reading strategies below

apply to either gapped-text format.

WHAT IS THIS TASK REALLY TESTING?

This task tests how well you understand the structure of a text. A correct sentence must fit its surroundings, not just mention the same subject. Look for three kinds of evidence:

- Reference: what do words such as it, they, this and these refer to?
- Logic: does the sentence introduce a contrast, an explanation, a result or the next event?
- Development: does it move the paragraph forward and prepare for the sentence that follows?

A useful rule is: check the connection before the gap and the connection after it. A sentence that fits only one side is not yet a secure answer.

A SIX-STEP METHOD

1. READ THE WHOLE TEXT FIRST

Read the title and the text without trying to fill every gap immediately. Identify the topic, the writer's main point and the order of events. Is the text describing a personal experience, explaining a problem or arguing for a change?

Do not stop at every unfamiliar word. You can often understand the structure without knowing every item of vocabulary.

2. READ ALL EIGHT OPTIONS

Read sentences A-H and notice words that require context. A sentence beginning These volunteers... needs a group of volunteers nearby. A sentence beginning Despite this... needs a situation that contrasts with what happens next.

Also notice sentences that introduce something new. A local shop offered to help. could introduce a shop that is mentioned as it in the next sentence.

3. READ AROUND EACH GAP

Read at least the sentence before and after the gap. Sometimes the clue is further away, so include the whole paragraph when necessary. Ask: What is missing here: a reason, a result, a contrast, an example or a new event?

4. START WITH THE STRONGEST CONNECTIONS

Complete the gaps with clear evidence first. A plural reference, a named person or an obvious sequence

of events may make one

answer much more secure than the others. Mark the option as used, but keep uncertain answers provisional.

5. COMPARE THE REMAINING CANDIDATES

If two sentences look possible, insert each one mentally and read the paragraph again. Check both sides, the time sequence and the writer's point. Do not choose a sentence simply because it contains a word from the text.

6. READ THE COMPLETED TEXT

Read the whole text with your answers in place. It should form a coherent argument or story. Check that you have used each chosen option once and left exactly one unused. If the final gap seems impossible, review your earlier uncertain choices rather than forcing the last available sentence into it.

THE CLUES THAT HELP MOST

PRONOUNS AND REFERENCE WORDS

He, she, it and they usually point to something already mentioned. Check that the reference is clear and that singular and plural forms agree. However, this can refer to a whole situation, not just the nearest noun.

For example: The organisers changed the starting time. This confused several participants. Here, this refers to the change, not to the organisers.

LINKING EXPRESSIONS

- However, nevertheless, despite this: look for a contrast.
- As a result, therefore, consequently: look for a cause before the result.
- For example, for instance: look for a general point that needs an illustration.
- In addition, also, another: look for an earlier point that the sentence adds to.

- At first, later, eventually: check the order of events.

A linking expression is a clue, not an answer by itself. Two options may both contain a contrast, but only one will contrast with the right idea.

VOCABULARY CONNECTIONS

The correct option may use a synonym rather than repeat a word. Expensive might connect with the cost; an experiment might connect with the trial. Follow the meaning, not just identical words.

The extra sentence may share vocabulary with the passage while introducing an event or idea that does not belong there.

TRY AN ORIGINAL SEVEN-GAP TASK

The following exercise was written for this guide. It is not taken from an official Cambridge examination. Choose from sentences A-H to fill gaps 9-15. There is one extra sentence.

A REPAIR CAFE AT SCHOOL

Last autumn, our environmental club decided to hold a repair cafe at school. Students would bring broken objects, and volunteers would help them repair them rather than throw them away. Our first plan was to use the school hall. [9] We therefore moved the event to the science classroom, which was available that afternoon.

Next, we needed people who could teach practical skills. We contacted several parents and local residents who had experience repairing household items. [10] These volunteers agreed to show students basic techniques rather than simply do the repairs for them.

Finding equipment was another challenge. We needed tools, spare materials and somewhere to keep everything. [11] It provided screwdrivers, glue and a box of spare parts, so we did not have to buy them.

A week before the event, we had received only four bookings. Some club members suggested cancelling because the number was so low.

[12] By the following morning, twenty more students had signed up after seeing it online.

On the day, one student arrived with a backpack whose zip would no longer close. She assumed that the whole zip needed replacing.

[13] Once it had been removed, the zip worked again and her backpack was ready to use.

Most repairs were successful, but we could not fix every object safely at school. A lamp with damaged electrical wiring was one

example. [14] The owner followed this advice instead of trying to repair the wiring herself.

At the end, we asked participants whether they would attend another repair cafe. Almost everyone said yes. We had originally

imagined it as a one-off activity. [15] The next one is already planned for November.

THE MISSING SENTENCES

- A. A volunteer noticed that a small piece of fabric was caught inside it.
- B. A local hardware shop offered to lend us what we needed.
- C. That enthusiastic response persuaded us to make it a monthly event.
- D. However, a drama rehearsal had already been booked there for the same time.
- E. Several students decided to sell their unwanted clothes at a weekend market.
- F. Instead, we made a short video explaining what people could bring.
- G. We advised its owner to take it to a qualified electrician.
- H. Three of them replied that they would be happy to help.

Before checking: write down one clue on each side of every gap. If you can explain a choice only by saying "it is about repairs", look again.

ANSWERS AND EXPLANATIONS

9 D; 10 H; 11 B; 12 F; 13 A; 14 G; 15 C. Extra sentence: E.

- 9 D: there refers to the school hall, and the rehearsal creates a clash. The following sentence explains the result: the event moves to the classroom.

- 10 H: them refers to the parents and local residents. Their offer to help introduces the people called these volunteers in the next sentence.
- 11 B: the shop responds to the equipment problem. The next sentence uses it to refer to that shop and names the tools it provided.
- 12 F: instead contrasts with cancelling. The video explains the next sentence: students see it online and sign up.
- 13 A: the fabric explains why the zip will not close. Once it had been removed then refers to the piece of fabric, not to the zip.
- 14 G: the damaged wiring requires specialist help. This advice in the following sentence refers to visiting a qualified electrician.
- 15 C: that enthusiastic response refers to the positive feedback. Making the cafe monthly explains why another event is already planned.
- E is unused: selling unwanted clothes is related to reducing waste, but no paragraph introduces those clothes or develops the market idea. A related topic is not enough.

COMMON MISTAKES TO AVOID

- Checking only before the gap: always read what follows too.
- Matching repeated words: a distractor can share vocabulary without fitting the paragraph.
- Ignoring reference words: make sure every pronoun has a clear referent.
- Keeping an early guess at all costs: revise provisional answers when later evidence conflicts with them.
- Guessing an answer pattern: option letters do not tell you the narrative order. Use textual evidence.
- Trying to use all eight options: one sentence must remain unused.

HOW TO PRACTISE EFFECTIVELY

First, complete a task without a timer and explain why each answer fits. Then practise under time pressure. A target of roughly ten minutes for a gapped-text exercise can be a useful starting point, but it is a practice target, not an official separate time limit.

After checking your answers, review the evidence rather than memorising the letters. For every mistake,

identify whether you missed a reference, a contrast, a time sequence or the paragraph's main point. This makes the next exercise more useful.

YOUR FINAL CHECKLIST

- I understand the topic and the overall development of the text.
- Every chosen sentence connects with what comes before and after it.
- Pronouns, linking expressions and the order of events make sense.
- I have used each chosen option once and left exactly one unused.
- I have reread the completed text, not just the individual gaps.

The best answer is the sentence with the strongest connections, not merely the most familiar vocabulary. Practise this method in FCE Reading Part 6 on [EnglishExam.eu \[exam/FCE/reading/2\]](http://EnglishExam.eu/exam/FCE/reading/2).

