

B2 First for Schools Reading and Use of English Part 6 (Gapped text)

Prepare to read. Prepare for exam success.

Top tip! Read everything in English.

Each task in this lesson requires you to conduct online research on websites that are written *in English only*. Don't translate the text! These tasks will help you to improve your ability to read and skim a text in English for the main idea, and also to read for detail - both skills that you already have in your first language, but which don't transfer automatically when you learn another language.

Summary

In this lesson you will:

- Practise reading skills.
- Choose a text to read in English.
- Deduce the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary from the surrounding context.
- Read the text in more detail.
- Practise Reading part 6.

Research task 1: Take an active interest

In this lesson you are going to practise reading stories from the BBC website.

Tip! Use your strengths and interests to improve your understanding.

We're usually more motivated to read something when we're genuinely interested in the topic. Before you read a whole text, just read the title and the beginning paragraph. Ask yourself: What do you already know about this topic? How do you feel about it?

1. The topic of this lesson is **inventions**. What do you think is the most useful invention of modern times? What about the *least* useful? Take some notes in your notebook of which invention(s) you think are most/least useful and why.
2. Now, for each of the following articles, read only the title and the first 4-5 sentences. Then choose one article which you find interesting, and which you will read in more detail.
 - **World wide web**¹
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/47514334>
 - **Mobile phone**²
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/click_online/8639590.stm
 - **Plastic**³

¹ Invented in 1989, article published in 2019.

² Invented in 1973, article published in 2010.

Reading task 1: Reading for gist

Now that you have chosen the article which you find most interesting, quickly read the whole text (in approximately 2 minutes). You don't need to understand everything yet - just try to get the main idea.

Tip! Just read quickly the first time.

This reading strategy gives you a general understanding of the ideas, style and structure of the text. This helps your brain process the basic information first, so when you go back and look for more detail, you already have some knowledge of the text and it's easier to understand the details.

Research task 2: "Word attack" strategies to deal with new vocabulary

You've probably noticed some unfamiliar vocabulary in the text. Now is your chance to find out what it means by "attacking" those words! Here's one way to develop your vocabulary skills:

1. Make a note in your notebook of 3-4 words in the text which you don't know.
2. Now look more closely at these words in the text and, for each word:
 - a. Focus on **form**: Look at the spelling of the word. Look at its parts. Are there any parts which you recognise, even if you don't know the whole word? (For example, does the beginning or ending of the word suggest that it is a noun, a verb, an adjective, etc.? Check **Cambridge Dictionary's page about word formation** for help with this.) Does it look similar to a word which you know in another language?⁴
 - b. Focus on **use**: What words come immediately before and immediately after it? Do you recognise these words? Do you think they add anything meaningful to the unknown word? Could there be more than one meaning? (For example, in the phrase "**green** vehicles", this first word could refer to a colour or to something environmentally-friendly.)
 - c. Focus on **co-text**: Read the whole sentence carefully. Say it out loud. Now read the sentence immediately before this and the sentence immediately after this. What information do these sentences give? What would be logical or possible before / after this information? More detail about the same thing? Something positive? Something negative? A fact? An opinion?
 - d. Focus on **meaning**: Now you have a clearer idea about this unknown word. What do you think it means? Do you know any synonyms? What happens if you try to replace the word with one of these synonyms? How do you think you would say this word in your first language?
3. Good detective work! First, make a note of your ideas. Then, look up the unknown word in the **Cambridge Dictionary**. Were your guesses correct?

³ Invented in the early 1900s, article published in 2020.

⁴ This is a useful strategy, but be careful! Some words are borrowed from another language but the meaning or use is not the same in both languages.

Need help? Here is an example of how you might follow the four steps above, a-d. Imagine you read the following sentences in a text and you don't recognise the word in *italics*.

I can't believe my friend keeps his pet fish in such a tiny bowl. The fish is absolutely *humungous*. Surely it doesn't have enough space to swim in there!

- Focus on **form**: It ends with **-ous**. This is a typical adjective ending, and this word is describing a fish so I think *humungous* is an adjective.
- Focus on **use**: The word before it is *absolutely* and it's followed by an exclamation mark (!). I know phrases like "absolutely amazing" and "absolutely terrified" and these phrases both describe extreme things: very good and very scared. People use these phrases and punctuation to express something quite strong. So I think *humungous* is probably another extreme adjective.
- Focus on **co-text**: The previous sentence suggests the bowl is too small for the fish, and the following sentence suggests that the fish doesn't have enough space.
- Focus on **meaning**: I guess that *humungous* probably means *very big* or *huge*. If I say "The fish is absolutely *huge*" this seems to have a similar meaning.

Reading task 2: Reading for more detail

You've got the main idea of the text now, and you've already started looking in more detail. Now it's time to read the whole text again more carefully and take brief notes on the main ideas.

- Try to see the text as a series of 6-7 connected ideas.
- Keep your notes short. Can you use just 2 or 3 words to summarise the main idea of each section?

Research task 2: "Text attack" strategies to understand text structure

Now you know the main ideas of the text and the overall structure. You've also looked at the meaning of some unfamiliar words. But a lot of the "little" words also do a very important job in the text by connecting ideas and making these connections clear for the reader.

Choose 2-3 sections of the text which you found quite clear. Read these again and look for examples of connecting words and phrases, like these:

- Words for avoiding repetition:** *it, they, him, her, this, that, these, those, which, one, in other words, etc.*
- Words for comparing, contrasting and connecting ideas:** *also, however, although, but, on the other hand, therefore, as a result, additionally, another, instead, after, while, etc.*

Need help? Here's an example of how you might identify linking words in a text.

I can't believe my friend keeps his pet fish in such a tiny bowl. The fish is absolutely *hurlungous*. Surely it doesn't have enough space to swim in there! But I guess he knows what's best for it..

Exam task: Reading and Use of English Part 6

In **Research Tasks 1 and 2**, above, you used the text *around* certain words to find their meaning or understand the structure of the text in general. You need to use a similar strategy in Part 6 of the Reading and Use of English paper.

In this exam task, you will read a text with some sentences removed. To choose the best sentence to fill each of these gaps, you need to understand the structure of the whole thing. But you won't have a lot of time. It's important therefore, that you can use your detective skills to "attack" the text quickly and successfully.

Top tips for success

Suggested process:

1. Quickly read the text to get a general idea of its topic, main ideas and structure. Ignore the gaps.
2. Read sentences A-G.
3. Read around the gaps in the text carefully. What comes before each gap? What comes after it?
4. In the text and in sentences A-G, underline the words which connect ideas and information. (You practised this in **Research Task 2**, above.)
5. Look also at tenses and time references (words like *had gone*, *will have finished*, *before*, *while*, *after*, *then*, etc.) in the text and in sentences A-G.
6. Take one of the sentences A-G, and find the best gap to put it in.
7. Read the text again quickly to see if it still makes sense.
8. Repeat steps 6 and 7 until you have found a place for each sentence except one. (It should be clear now that one of the sentences doesn't really fit anywhere well. You don't need this sentence.)
9. Re-read the whole text one last time. Does it still all make sense?

Two important things to remember:

1. It's OK to change your mind. If your first choice was wrong, you will accidentally limit your choices for the remaining gaps.
2. Remember to pay attention to the flow of ideas, not just the use of linking words. Both are important. (That's why you read it quickly the first time to get a general sense of the main ideas in each paragraph!) A sentence might contain a word that seems to fit a specific gap, for example, but the development of ideas in the whole text might show that this sentence doesn't make sense in that gap.

Now try the sample task on the next page!

Try to spend **no more than 15 minutes** on this section.

Young Inventor

Schoolboy Tim Freeman has come up with a clever idea to improve the efficiency of school buses.

Tim Freeman was just twelve years old when he came up with a revolutionary idea that would make school buses more energy efficient. This would not only save money, but also help the environment. Five years later, the schoolboy finally saw his dream come true.

It all began when Tim did a short summer course on aerodynamics, the study of the movement of air around objects. **37** He realised that the perfect candidate was his school bus. It had a very square front which meant it did not use petrol efficiently, only travelling 3km per litre, compared to a private car that can average about 8.5km per litre. He decided it was high time the vehicle was improved.

After thinking about it for a while, Tim came up with the idea of attaching a large piece of strong transparent plastic to the front of the vehicle, covering the windscreen. It would help redirect the flow of air around the bus and thus make it move forwards more easily. **38** At least, that was the theory.

While his science teachers loved the idea, Tim needed to find enough money to build a model and test it. **39** Helped by his older sister Alice, he managed to obtain a grant from an organisation that helps young people develop new ideas.

Over the next year, Tim used the money to build a

small-scale model of his invention. He did tests on it by attaching it to a mini toy school bus and seeing how it performed in a little wind tunnel he built in his garage. **40** Because of this he knew he now needed to step it up and create a life-sized version that could be put to the test on a real bus.

By the time Tim was fifteen, he had set up a team of young engineers like himself, and been helped by his sister and his local community to obtain another grant to develop his idea further. While Tim and his team were able to build the initial versions, they soon realised that they needed some expert help to really get going. **41** The person who volunteered was the one who had inspired Tim to start thinking about the project in the first place. She had taught him on the summer course when he was twelve. Along with two of her engineering students she worked with Tim through the summer to finally help him realise his dream.

The final version of Tim's invention looks rather different from his original idea. Instead of a transparent piece of plastic that covers the windscreen of the bus, it is a smooth ramp-shaped 'hat' that gets fixed to the roof of the bus. **42** In tests done on virtual and real roads it has helped increase the efficiency of school bus fuel use by 10-20%. Maybe this ingenious device will eventually help other buses and even cars become more fuel-efficient!

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|---|--|
| A So they began writing to local universities to see if anyone would provide the advice and knowledge they needed. | E He knew that was the only way to see if his design really worked. |
| B This made it clear to them that the design would have to be changed. | F This design provides the same benefits but costs less to manufacture and install. |
| C This prompted him to look for a way to use what he had learned. | G In this way, the bus would become more energy efficient. |
| D The data from these were good and his idea was looking promising. | |

Source: Sample Test 1, D255/01. © UCLES 2015 Cambridge English Level 1 Certificate in ESOL International.

Now check your answers!

When preparing for an exam, it's important not only to know which answers are correct and which are incorrect, but also **why** they are correct or incorrect. For each item below, check your own answers on the previous page and take some notes on **why** the answers below are correct.

Answers

Gap	Answer	Why is this correct?
37	C	
38	G	
39	E	
40	D	
41	A	
42	F	

Next steps

Try to remember the strategies you practised in this lesson and try further some practise for Reading Part 6.

Go to the **Cambridge English website** for a wealth of further exam preparation resources and materials.