

B1 Preliminary for Schools Reading Part 4 – Teachers' Notes

Description

Students will look at task 4 and understand how best to learn how best to approach it.

Time required:	50 minutes
Materials required:	Student handouts 1 and 2 (one copy per student)
Aims:	- to familiarise students with Part 4 of the Reading paper - to develop techniques for tackling this type of task

Procedure

- Write the following questions on the board and have students discuss them in pairs or small groups for approximately 5 minutes.
 - Is it important to protect the environment?
 - What do you do at home to protect the environment?
 - What do you do at school to protect the environment?

Have a short whole class discussion about ways people protect the environment.

- Tell students they are going to look at the first part of a Part 4 task from the B1 Preliminary for Schools Reading Paper, which is about planting trees.
- Write the following two questions on the board:
 - Who is Mark Rotheram?
 - Why is he talking about planting trees?

- Give out **Student handout 1** and ask them to read the whole text quickly to answer the two questions. They should ignore the three exercises and read the text only at this stage. Allow approximately 4 minutes for this, and then feed back to the whole class (1. a 13-year-old student, 2. because his teacher suggested this as a green project for their class).

Ensure everyone in the classroom understands what a green project is: perhaps refer students to some of the ways they protect the environment at school they came up with during step 1.

- Now refer students to **Exercise 1**. In pairs, they should decide which of the three sentences goes in each of the two gaps. Check the answers with the whole class. Now ask the pairs to work together again to underline words in the text and the missing sentences which helped them to place the sentences correctly (see **Answer key**). Tell students that making connections by underlining words that connect is the best way to do Part 4; the answer must be appropriate in terms of the sense of the text, but it must also be grammatically correct. The distractor answer may make good sense, but often either the pronouns don't match up or the topic is different.

6. Now ask them to look at **Exercise 2**. In their pairs again, they should decide which sentence might be removed to make a gap, and why. The aim of this exercise is to help students to think about how the task is constructed and several answers may be possible. After 4–5 minutes, feed back with the whole class (see **Answer key**). Note that there is no correct answer here, and students who chose alternatives to the key should underline parts of the text and gapped sentences which show how their alternatives would work (see underlining in **Answer key**).
7. Students now look at **Exercise 3** individually, and complete the remaining two gaps. When they have finished, they can check their answers with their partner before checking with the whole class (see **Answer key**).
8. Now give out **Handout 2** and ask the students to discuss their answers in small groups or in new pairs. Discuss the answers with the whole class (see **Answer key**), and answer any other questions about Part 4 that students may have.

Additional information

- Part 4 consists of one long gapped text from which five sentences have been removed and placed in jumbled order after the text. There are three extra sentences which do not fit any of the gaps. In this activity the task has been broken down into three parts to help the students develop strategies to tackle this type of question.
- Give your students plenty of practice in recognising a wide range of linguistic devices which mark the logical and cohesive development of a text, for example words and phrases indicating time periods, cause and effect, exemplification, contrast, pronouns, etc. This will help them to make the correct choice between two possible sentences which seem rather similar at first sight.
- It is important to discourage your students from relying on ‘word spotting’, that is assuming that if the same word, name, date, etc. appears in the surrounding text and one of the options, that is automatically the right sentence to fill the gap. Train them to check all the other linguistic clues carefully before making their final decision.

Answer key

Student handout 1

Exercise 1

1. A 2. B

This spring, our teacher suggested we should get involved in a green project and plant some trees around the school. Everyone thought it was a great idea, so we started looking online for the best trees to buy.

1. _____ If we wanted them to grow properly, they had to be the right type – but there were so many different ones available! So our teacher suggested that we should look for trees that grew naturally in our part of the world. 2. _____ They'd also be more suitable for the wildlife here.

- A. But we soon found that choosing trees was quite complicated.
- B. That way, the trees would be used to local conditions.
- C. However, our parents did offer to help with the digging!

Exercise 2

Sentences in ***bold italics*** are those gapped in the exam task. Underlined words show the links between the text and the removed sentences.

Then we had to think about the best place for planting the trees. We learnt that trees are happiest where they have room to grow, with plenty of space for their branches. The trees might get damaged close to the school playgrounds, for example. 3. ***So we tried to avoid areas where students were very active.*** Finally, we found a quiet corner close to the school garden – perfect!

Exercise 3

5. C 6. B

If necessary, run through the connections the students should have made (underlined below):

- 5. Once we'd planted the trees, we knew we had to look after them carefully. We all took turns to check the leaves regularly and make sure they had no strange spots or marks on them. ***That could mean the tree had a disease.*** And we decided to check the following spring in case the leaves turned yellow too soon, as that could also mean the tree was sick.
- 6. We all knew that we wouldn't be at the school anymore by the time the trees grew tall, and that was a bit sad. But we'd planted the trees to benefit not only the environment, but also future students at the

school. ***We knew they'd get as much pleasure from them as we had.*** And that thought really cheered us up!

Student handout 2

1. Should you quickly skim read through the main body of the text first?

Yes.

Reading through the base text first gives candidates a sense of what it is about, how the ideas are developed, how many key characters there are, etc. Getting this initial feel for the text will help candidates be more aware of the text as a whole.

Note to teacher: Train your students to read through the text with the gaps in it so that they gain an overall idea of the structure of the text and the development of the writer's ideas, before starting to do the task.

2. What reading approach should you take for this task?

A Intensive reading for detail, reading the text carefully around each gap.

This task requires intensive reading for detail. Candidates will have to read the text both before and after each gap carefully before arriving at an answer.

3. If the sentence you choose fits the information before the gap, then it's the correct answer.

No.

When you are selecting a sentence to fill a gap, make sure that you look carefully at the information before and after the gap.

Candidates sometimes make the wrong choices by selecting options which seem to fit the text before the gap, and neglecting to check that the text after the gap follows on logically.

4. Once you've completed all the gaps, should you read through the whole text again?

Yes.

This is an important way of checking that the text flows coherently as a whole. This final checking process may help to alert candidates to answers which don't sit well in the text.

5. Do you think this part of the test will take longer to complete than others?

Yes.

In the light of comments 1–3, the answer to this is probably yes.

Student handout 1**Exercise 1**

Read the first paragraph and decide which sentences (A, B or C) fit in the first two gaps.

This spring, our teacher suggested we should get involved in a green project and plant some trees around the school. Everyone thought it was a great idea, so we started looking online for the best trees to buy.

1 _____ If we wanted them to grow properly, they had to be the right type – but there were so many different ones available! So our teacher suggested that we should look for trees that grew naturally in our part of the world. 2 _____ They'd also be more suitable for the wildlife here.

- A. But we soon found that choosing trees was quite complicated.
- B. That way, the trees would be used to local conditions.
- C. That could mean the tree had a disease.

Exercise 2

Look at the next paragraph and choose one sentence which you would remove to make gap 3. Say why.

Then we had to think about the best place for planting the trees. We learnt that trees are happiest where they have room to grow, with plenty of space for their branches. The trees might get damaged close to the school playgrounds, for example. So we tried to avoid areas where students were very active. Finally, we found a quiet corner close to the school garden – perfect!

Exercise 3

Now complete the text by filling in the last 2 gaps, 5 and 6.

Once we'd planted the trees, we knew we had to look after them carefully. We all took turns to check the leaves regularly and make sure they had no strange spots or marks on them. 5 _____ And we decided to check the following spring in case the leaves turned yellow too soon, as that could also mean the tree was sick.

We all knew that we wouldn't be at the school anymore by the time the trees grew tall, and that was a bit sad. But we'd planted the trees to benefit not only the environment, but also future students at the school.

6 _____ And that thought really cheered us up!

- A But at least we were doing it in the right season.
- B We knew they'd get as much pleasure from them as we had.
- C That could mean the tree had a disease.

Student handout 2

With another student, discuss the best answer for each of the following questions.

1. Should you quickly read through the main body of the text first? Why?
Yes / No
2. What reading approach should you take for this task?
A Intensive reading for detail - reading the text carefully around each gap.
B Scanning - looking for specific words or phrases to help me fill the gaps.
3. If the sentence you choose fits the information before the gap, then it's the correct answer.
Yes / No
4. Once you've completed all the gaps, should you read through the whole text again?
Yes / No
5. Do you think this part of the test will take longer to complete than others?
Yes / No