



Cambridge Assessment  
English

# Developing reading skills for Cambridge English Qualifications: A guide for teachers

Cambridge

English Qualifications

B2 First

for Schools



# Contents

Who this guide is for .....	3
How to use this guide .....	3
Key terminology .....	4
Challenges of reading .....	6
Developing your learners' reading skills .....	7
Assessing your learners' reading skills .....	8
Preparing learners for the B2 First for Schools Reading paper .....	9
How the paper is assessed .....	10
Part 1 activities .....	12
Part 2 activities .....	14
Part 3 activities .....	16
Part 4 activities .....	18
Part 5 activities .....	20
Part 6 activities .....	24
Part 7 activities .....	28
Extra resources .....	31

# Who this guide is for

Teachers spend many hours helping to prepare learners for the different types of reading tasks that are assessed in Cambridge English Qualifications. This guide is for you. With lots of practical tips and real examples, it will help you to develop and practise learners' reading skills in preparation for B2 First for Schools.

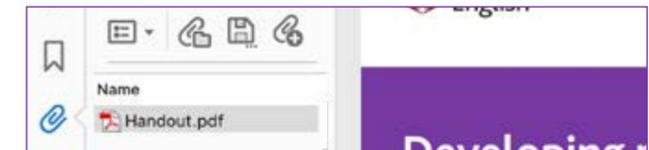
About B2 First for Schools	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Tests reading, writing, speaking and listening skills</li> <li>✓ Shows that learners have the language skills they need to communicate in an English-speaking environment, including skills to:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• communicate effectively face to face</li> <li>• write clear detailed English</li> <li>• follow the news</li> <li>• write letters, reports, stories and many other types of text</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Comes after B1 Preliminary for Schools and before C1 Advanced</li> <li>✓ Like B2 First, tests learners at <b>CEFR</b> Level B2</li> <li>✓ Unlike B2 First, is aimed at school-age learners rather than adults</li> <li>✓ Can be taken on paper or on a computer</li> </ul>

You can find out more about B2 First for Schools and other levels on our website. See [cambridgeenglish.org/schools](https://cambridgeenglish.org/schools).

# How to use this guide

To get the most from this guide:

- Try the practical ideas and reflect on how these techniques affect the processes of learning and teaching in your classroom.
- Throughout the guide, there are links to **activities**, other online resources, and there are feature boxes such as 'Further practice' and 'Top tips' for you to try out in your classroom.
- There is a **Handout** attached, containing the example exam questions, which you can print out and photocopy for your learners.



- You can navigate the document by using the hyperlinks in the text and the buttons on each spread:
 

Previous page
Next page
First page
Previous view

# Key terminology

Language assessment is a specialist field and there is some common terminology which might be unfamiliar to you. Learning to recognise these terms will help you to understand this guide.

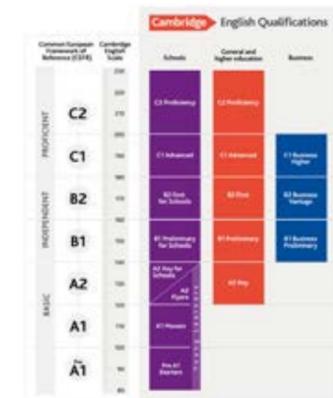
Term	Definition
cohesive devices	Words or phrases that are used to connect ideas between different parts of a text. They include pronouns, synonyms, and transitional words such as <i>and</i> , <i>but</i> , <i>although</i> etc.
collocation	A word or phrase that sounds natural and correct when it is used together with another word or phrase, e.g. <i>heavy rain</i> or, Can I <i>ask</i> a question? <i>not</i> , Can I <i>make</i> a question?
distractor	A wrong answer that is similar to the correct answer, designed to see whether the person being tested can notice the difference.
gapped text	A text with some sentences removed. Learners have to select the correct sentence to complete it.
L1	A speaker's first or native language.
learner/candidate	A learner is someone who is learning English, usually in a classroom. A candidate is someone who takes an exam.
multiple-choice (m/c) cloze	A text with gaps which learners complete by selecting from multiple-choice options.
open cloze	A text with gaps which learners complete with a suitable word.
rubric	Instructions on an exam paper that tell learners how to complete questions.

When other terms appear in this guide, you'll find an explanation nearby in a glossary box:

## Key terminology

The **Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)** is an international standard for describing language ability. It uses a six-point scale, from **A1** for beginners up to **C2** for those who have mastered a language. This makes it easy for anyone involved in language teaching and testing, such as teachers or learners, to see the level of different qualifications.

## The CEFR



# Challenges of reading

Reading is a skill that presents many challenges that learners and teachers need to deal with to prepare learners for success in our exams.

## For the teacher

- We are sometimes reluctant to spend class time on reading – it is often seen as less interesting or a less effective use of time than practising speaking.
- Motivating learners who don't read much even in their own language is difficult.
- It can be time-consuming and hard to find texts and materials that are interesting.
- Most classes will usually have learners with a range of reading abilities and who will read at different speeds, so teachers need to be ready for the early finishers.

## For the learner

- Learners say that understanding vocabulary is the greatest challenge to comprehension.
- Wanting to understand every word but not being able to do so can be very demotivating.
- Having enough time is another common issue – especially in an exam context.
- Non-literal language and multi-word verbs can be difficult for learners' comprehension.
- 'False friends' – words which seem to be similar to a word in your learners' own language (**L1**), but which have a different meaning in English – can also present a challenge.
- Understanding how a text is structured and the **cohesive devices** that hold it together may be very different in a learner's L1.

# Developing your learners' reading skills

## ★ Top tips

- ✓ **Do ...** give your learners plenty of practice, in class and at home, of reading a variety of different genres and text types. These might be both authentic and adapted – magazines, social media, news and sports websites, newspapers, text chats and **graded readers**.
- ✓ **Do ...** make sure your learners know clearly what each exam task type is asking them to do. Is it a multiple-choice task? Do you have to fill the gap? How many words do you need to write? How much time do you have? Always quickly check these kinds of questions in class so learners get into the habit of asking themselves too.
- ✗ **Don't ...** forget to tell your learners that it's a good idea to underline the key words in an exam question to help focus on the instructions.
- ✓ **Do ...** get learners to practise **skimming and scanning** both shorter and longer texts. It's a good idea to encourage learners to always skim-read the text quickly first to get a general idea of what it's about. There is an example of this in the **Part 1 Activity**.
- ✓ **Do ...** help learners think about different ways they read texts. For example, if they are reading an information leaflet, ask them to scan the text to find some specific information. However, if they are reading a message, then ask them to think about how they would reply.
- ✓ **Do ...** encourage your learners to try to work out or guess the meaning of words they don't know. Get them to use the context and the rest of the text to help. Ask learners to think about the part of speech (noun, verb, adjective etc.), if the word has a positive or negative feeling, and if there are any similarities to other words they know or to words in their **L1**. There is an example of this in the **Part 5 activity**; there is also an example of identifying different parts of speech in the **Part 2 activity**.
- ✗ **Don't ...** let your learners waste time. Tell them that if they don't know a word and they can't guess the general meaning from the other words around it, to skip it and just keep on reading the text.
- ✓ **Do ...** ask learners to predict what the answer might be before looking at the multiple-choice options, then look at the options and choose the one closest to their prediction. There is an example of how to do this in the **Part 7 Activity**.

## Assessing your learners' reading skills

The key to understanding how well your learners' reading skills are developing is through regular, effective assessment. It's a good idea to use a mix of teacher, **peer** and **self-assessment** during an exam preparation course. This variety can make lessons more interesting and engaging.

### ★ Top tips

- ✓ **Do** ... ask your learners to think about *why* an answer is right or wrong. This will help you to assess whether they have understood what is being tested in each question.
- ✓ **Do** ... demonstrate why the answers are correct, and why some possible choices are wrong. This will show your learners how to analyse the questions and help them get to the correct answers. See the **task familiarisation sections** starting on page 12.
- ✓ **Do** ... get your learners to justify and explain their answer choices to each other. See an example of this in the **Part 2 task familiarisation and activity** on pages 14–16.
- ✓ **Do** ... talk to your learners about what feedback they appreciate and work together to find what works best. Adopting different approaches to giving feedback is particularly helpful to support learners with specific learning needs, such as dyslexia.
- ✗ **Don't** ... forget that assessment isn't just about correcting mistakes – **formative assessment** is about learning from feedback.
- ✗ **Don't** ... just give tests to assess your learners. Assessment doesn't have to be formal. You can also use games and quizzes such as **Kahoot!** to create fun activities which assess learners' understanding.

### 📖 Key terminology

**Peer assessment** is when learners give feedback on each other's language, work, learning strategies, or performance. Research shows that people who are similar to the learner in age, gender, first language and learning goals are very motivating as role models.

**Self-assessment** is when learners decide for themselves if they think their progress or language use is good or not. Developing good self-awareness is important for becoming an effective independent learner.

**Formative assessment** is when a teacher gives learners feedback on their progress during a course, rather than at the end of it, so that the learners can learn from the feedback.

## Preparing learners for the B2 First for Schools Reading paper

In order to become a good reader, there are many habits and qualities that you can encourage learners to try and develop.

### A good reader:

- reads a wide range of things and reads regularly
- uses different skills such as **skimming** and **scanning**
- guesses the meaning of words they don't know
- reflects on what they have read
- records useful new vocabulary and tries to use it in their language practice.

### To do well in Cambridge English Qualifications, learners must also understand:

- how the B2 First for Schools Reading paper is organised and assessed
- their own strengths and weaknesses
- how they can improve any areas of weakness.

### 📖 Key terminology

**Skimming** is when you read quickly. For example, to understand the main ideas in the text and discover what type of text it is – is it a serious news article, a notice, a magazine?

**Scanning** is when you read quickly to find specific information. For example, scanning a cinema guide to find a specific film or film times.

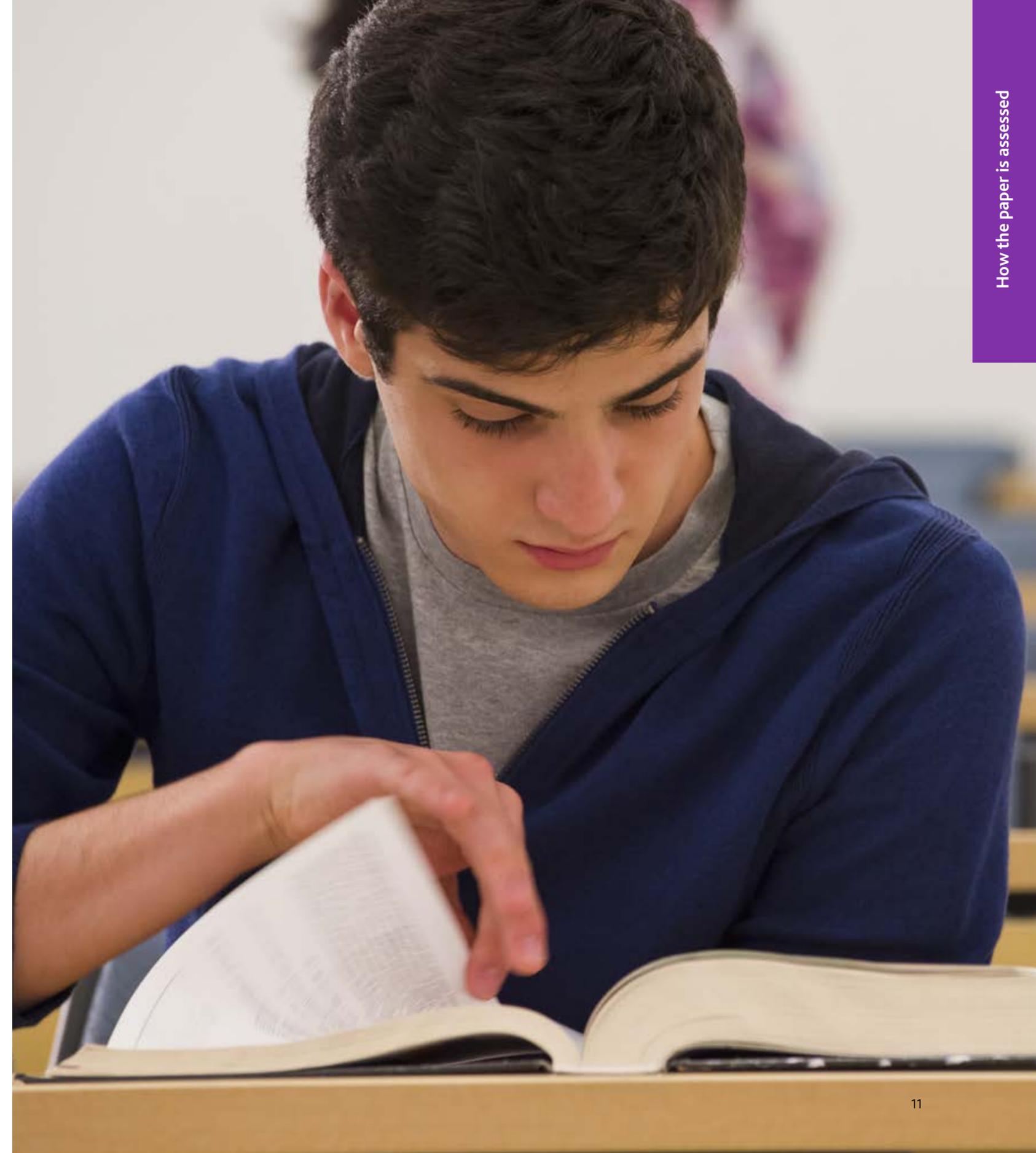
# How the paper is assessed

The B2 First for Schools Reading and Use of English paper has seven parts and lasts for 1 hour and 15 minutes in total. There is no extra time to copy answers to the answer sheet (if candidates are taking the paper-based test).

Part	Task types	What do candidates have to do?
1	Multiple-choice cloze	Read a modified cloze text containing eight gaps. There are 4-option multiple-choice items for each gap.
2	Open cloze	Read and complete a modified cloze text containing eight gaps.
3	Word formation	Read a text containing eight gaps. Each gap corresponds to a word. The stem of the missing word is given beside the text and must be changed to form the missing word.
4	Key word transformation	There are six separate items, each with a lead-in sentence and a gapped second sentence to be completed in two to five words, one of which is a given 'key' word.
5	Multiple choice	Read a text followed by six 4-option multiple choice questions.
6	Gapped text	Read a text from which sentences have been removed and placed in jumbled order after the text. Candidates must decide from which part of the text the sentences have been removed.
7	Multiple matching	Read a text or several short texts, preceded by multiple-matching questions. Candidates must match a prompt to elements in the text.

**Important note:** The example exam tasks used in this guide are provided to give you and your learners an idea of the format of the exam and what is being tested in each part. The tasks have not been fully pretested and calibrated like our published exams. To assess your learners' readiness for a live exam, use one of the official sample tests on [cambridgeenglish.org](https://www.cambridgeenglish.org), or go to our **Mock Test Toolkit** for tips on using sample tests.

The next section of this guide will look at each part of the Reading paper for B2 First for Schools. We will analyse why the answers are correct, and why other choices are wrong. Demonstrating this will show your learners how to analyse the questions and help them get to the correct answers.



## Part 1: Task familiarisation

**Aims:** To demonstrate the format of Part 1 and what is needed to get the correct answer; to raise awareness of **collocations**.

**Preparation:** Print out copies of Part 1 without answers in the attached **Handout**.

**Steps:** You can use the answers and explanations below to show learners how this exam part works either before you do the Part 1: Activity or afterwards as further practice.

Here is an example of two questions from Part 1.

Read the text below and decide which answer (A, B, C or D) best fits each gap. There is an example at the beginning (0).

**Example:**

0    A mentions    B suggests    C explains    D tells

### The invention of the drawing pin

As its name (0) ....., the drawing pin was originally used to hold down large sheets of paper by people working on technical drawings. Although the drawing pin proved to be a useful tool, there is some (1) ..... over who should be given the (2) ..... for its invention.

1    A contest    B debate    C quarrel    D dialogue

2    A praise    B reward    C credit    D approval

### Answer key

- 1 ✗ Option A is wrong as *contest* means a kind of competition and the text does not talk about that. ✗ C is also wrong as *quarrel* is a synonym of *argument* and implies anger, which there is no mention of in the text. Also, A and C can't be correct because if the noun which follows *some* is countable then the plural form is used. ✗ D also doesn't fit because the word *dialogue* is used to describe the conversation in a book or film. ✓ B is correct as *debate* means a discussion and it forms part of the **collocation** *there is some debate over something*.
- 2 ✗ Option A is incorrect because *praise* means to say that you admire someone or something, or that they are very good, and this text is not so positive – as is shown by using the word *although*. Moreover, although we can *be given praise*, we don't usually say *be given the praise* – so it doesn't fit here.
- ✗ B is also wrong as a *reward* is something good that you get or experience because you have worked hard or behaved well, which doesn't fit the context here. ✗ D is also wrong because *approval* means an opinion that something or someone is good or right, which again doesn't fit the context here.
- ✓ C is correct as *credit* suggests that someone is responsible for something good. It also forms part of the **collocation** *be given the credit for something*.

## Part 1: Activity

**Aims:** To raise awareness of the precise meanings of words and the importance of collocations; to practise skimming and scanning a text.

**Preparation:** Print out copies of the full Part 1 example with answer key in the attached **Handout**.

**Steps:**

1. Show the class a drawing pin and ask if they know what it's called in English. Give out the **full Part 1 example** in the attached **Handout**, which is about the history of the drawing pin.
2. Tell the learners not to worry about the gaps in the text, but to **skim** read first to get a general idea of the content. Feedback with the whole class.
3. Now ask learners to **scan** the text and try to find out who invented the drawing pin and when. Feedback with the whole class. (Answer: *Johann Kirsten in the early 20th century*.)
4. Give out the multiple-choice answer sheet and tell the learners the answers to questions 1–2 (see **Part 1: Task familiarisation**). By giving the answers you take away the pressure of just finding the correct answer which then enables learners to focus their attention on all the words in the 4-option multiple-choice.
5. Now ask the learners to think about what the reader needs to know about each of the words in the 4-option multiple-choice in order to choose the correct one to complete the gap. Ask them to think about how the words are different from each other in their meanings, what common collocations there are for each word, and any prepositions that might be needed. Tell them to take notes and to use a **dictionary** to help them.
6. Ask the learners to compare their ideas with a partner before feedback with the whole class – use the analysis in **Part 1: Task familiarisation** to help elicit their suggestions and to explain, where needed, making sure the learners explain why an answer is wrong as well as why it's correct.
7. Now get learners to look at the rest of the text and ask them to complete questions 3–8. Remind/elicite from the learners that to get the right answer they will have to think carefully about each of the words in the options just as they did in step 5.

### ★ Top tip

If you want your learners to work together on a printed task, give just one copy between two learners – this encourages collaboration and if both learners need a copy each, give out the second copy after a few minutes of them working together.

## Part 2: Task familiarisation

**Aims:** To demonstrate the format of Part 2 and what is needed to get the correct answer; to raise awareness of some of the grammatical features tested in Part 2.

**Preparation:** Print out copies of Part 2 without answers in the attached **Handout**.

**Steps:** You can use the answers and explanations below to show learners how this exam part works either before you do the Part 2: Activity or afterwards as further practice.

### Here is an example of three questions from Part 2.

Read the text below and think of the word which best fits each gap. Use only one word in each gap. There is an example at the beginning (0).

#### Litter-collecting birds

A French amusement park recently started using birds to pick (0) ... **up** ... rubbish.

The rooks, large black birds known to be particularly intelligent, (9) ... **have**... been taught to

collect small bits of rubbish, (10) ... **which** ... they then put into a small box. (11) ... **As** ...

a reward for their hard work, the birds receive a small amount of food.

#### Answer key

9 The auxiliary verb **have** is needed here to complete the present perfect passive verb form (*have been taught*).

10 The relative pronoun **which** fits here as it completes a non-defining relative clause. Note that **that** is not possible as the **relative clause** is not a defining one.

11 **As** in this sentence is a preposition that describes the purpose of something (*food as a reward*).

### Key terminology

**Relative clauses** can be defining, i.e. they contain information which is essential for our understanding of the whole sentence, e.g. 'there's only one clock *which works properly in this house*'. However, some relative clauses are non-defining, i.e. the clause contains additional information that is not essential for our understanding of the sentence – e.g. 'their new house, *which has five bedrooms*, is much larger than their previous one.' In defining relative clauses **that** can be used instead of **which** or **who**, particularly in spoken English. Whereas in non-defining relative clauses **that** cannot be used instead of **which/who**.

### Further practice

Here is **another lesson plan** to help your learners with the strategies needed for Part 2 of the B2 First for Schools Reading paper.

## Part 2: Activity

**Aims:** To raise awareness of and provide practice in using the parts of speech and grammar structures that are tested in Part 2.

**Preparation:** Print out copies of the extra activity – text about rooks and the example exam task in the attached **Handout**.

#### Steps:

1. Show the learners a picture of a rook and ask if they know what kind of bird it is and if they know anything about them. This helps create motivation to read the texts and allows the teacher to deal with any vocabulary problems.
2. Give out the attached **extra activity – text about rooks** and ask the learners to skim read the text and then turn over their paper and tell their partner three facts about rooks that they can remember.
3. Tell the learners that in Part 2 of the B2 First for Schools Reading paper there is a text with eight gaps to be filled. This task focuses mainly on grammar, and the text they have just read contains eight examples of the kinds of grammar words that Part 2 focuses on.
4. Write on the board:

Type of word	Example and question number	Type of word	Example and question number
Articles		Possessive adjectives	
Auxiliary verbs		Prepositions	
Linking words		Relative pronouns	
Negative words		Words in comparisons	

5. Ask the learners to look at the text again and to match the underlined words with the correct type of word.
6. Ask the learners to compare their answers with a partner before you feedback with the whole class. During feedback try to elicit more useful information about the different types of words (e.g. What other articles are there? When do we use *an*? When do we use *the*?).
7. If you haven't already used the sample text from **Part 2: Task familiarisation**, then write the title *Litter-collecting birds* on the board and ask the learners to tell their partner what they think the text will be about. Feedback their ideas with the whole class, dealing with any difficult vocabulary. If you have already used this text with the class, then you can use another one from a **B2 First for Schools Reading Paper** or a coursebook.
8. Now, ask the learners to quickly read the text, ignore the gaps and see if their predictions about the title were correct.
9. Finally, ask learners to complete the gaps with one suitable word – remind them of the typical parts of speech that are tested here – i.e. those which they found in the *Rooks* text. Remind learners to look carefully at the words before and after the gap to help them decide what part of speech is needed.

## Part 3: Task familiarisation

**Aims:** To demonstrate the format of Part 3 and what is needed to get the correct answer; to raise awareness of sentence structure and identifying parts of speech.

**Preparation:** Print out copies of Part 3 without answers in the attached **Handout**.

**Steps:** You can use the answers and explanations below to show learners how this exam part works either before you do the Part 3: Activity or afterwards as further practice.

### Here is an example of four questions from Part 3.

Read the text below. Use the word given in capitals at the end of some of the lines to form a word that fits in the gap **in the same line**. There is an example at the beginning **(0)**.

#### Why I love scuba diving

Today's blog is all about why I'm so **(0)** ... *passionate* ... about scuba diving, and why it gives me so much **(17)** ... *pleasure* ...

**PASSION**

**PLEASE**

I love the sense of **(18)** ... *excitement* ... and anticipation I get before every dive. I never know what's going to happen. Sometimes I see nothing all day, then suddenly a group of fish or dolphins will **(19)** ... *magically* ... appear out of the darkness. And because I'm wearing scuba diving kit I have the **(20)** ... *freedom* ... to swim alongside these creatures as if I'm a part of their world, which is thrilling.

**EXCITE**

**MAGIC**

**FREE**

#### Answer key

**17** ... *gives me so much* ... must be followed by an uncountable noun.

**18** *I love the sense of* ... will be followed by an abstract noun.

**19** An adverb is needed between the modal auxiliary verb *will* and the verb *appear*.

**20** *I have the* ... must be followed by a noun.

## Part 3: Activity

**Aims:** To raise awareness of and to practise word building.

**Preparation:** Make a list of all the possible words that can be formed from the eight stem words of a Part 3 question. For example, from the previous Part 3: Task familiarisation:

**PLEASE** – *pleased (adj)/ pleasing (adj)/ pleasurable (adj)/ pleasant (adj)/ unpleasant (adj)/ pleasure (n)*

**EXCITE** – *exciting (adj)/ excited (adj)/ unexciting (adj)/ unexcited (adj)/ excitable (adj)/ unexcitable (adj)/ excitement (n)/ excitedly (adv)*

#### Steps:

1. Choose a Part 3 task, either from a coursebook or a **B2 First for Schools Reading Paper**. Write the eight stem words on the board and tell the class they're going to play a game.
2. Divide the class into teams (two teams if it's a small class, four or more if bigger) and tell them to think of a name for their team. This always makes it more fun.  
Elicit that prefixes can be used to make negatives and some common suffixes to make nouns, adjectives and adverbs. Give the teams 5 minutes to work together and list all the possible words they can make from the stem words that are on the board.
3. Now play the game: the first team says a stem word from the board, the next team says one of the words they formed in step 2 – they should also say what part of speech the word is, the next team says another (different) word they made and its part of speech. Continue until the teams have run out of words – the last team to say a correct word wins the point.
4. Start the next round with a different team beginning by saying another of the stem words. Keep going until all the stem words have been used.
5. If the class hasn't already done the task that you took the stem words from, now give them the task to do. Remind them to look carefully at the words before and after each gap before deciding what part of speech is needed to complete the text.
6. You can play this game throughout the course to review Part 3 questions from past papers or coursebooks. It can be a fun way to revise word building.

## Further practice

Here is another **lesson plan** to help learners familiarise themselves with Part 3 of the B2 First for Schools Reading paper.

## Part 4: Task familiarisation

**Aims:** To demonstrate the format of Part 4 and what is needed to get the correct answer; to raise awareness of some of the grammatical features of sentence transformations.

**Preparation:** Print out copies of Part 4 without answers in the attached **Handout**.

**Steps:** You can use the answers and explanations below to show learners how this exam part works either before you do the Part 4: Activity or afterwards as further practice.

Here is an example of three questions from Part 4.

For questions **25–27**, complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence, using the word given. **Do not change the word given.** You must use between **two** and **five** words, including the word given.

**25** I want to get fitter by starting a new sport.

**TAKING**

I want to improve my ..... *fitness (level) by taking up* ..... a new sport.

**26** The weather was so bad that the football match had to be cancelled.

**RESULT**

The match had to be called ..... *off as a result* ..... of the bad weather.

**27** I was surprised that Jake was so angry when I told him my news.

**EXPECT**

I didn't ..... *expect Jake to be / expect that Jake would be* ..... so angry when I told him my news.

### Answer key

**25** The first sentence uses the comparative adjective *fitter* but the second sentence has *improve my* ... which must be followed by a noun (= *fitness*). The given word *taking* can be used to form the phrasal verb *taking up* which fits the meaning of *starting a new sport* in the first sentence.

**26** The second sentence needs the particle *off* to complete the phrasal verb *called off* which is a synonym of *cancelled* in the first sentence. The given word *result* can be used to complete the linking phrases *as a result (of)*. This structure reflects the cause and effect of the first sentence (cause = *weather was so bad*, effect = *the match had to be cancelled*) and means the same as *because of*.

**27** The negative auxiliary verb *didn't* can be followed by the given word *expect* to give the same meaning as the positive verb phrase *I was surprised* in the first sentence. There are two possible verb patterns with *expect*: *expect* + object + infinitive with *to* and *expect* + *that* clause.

## Part 4: Activity

**Aims:** To review sentence transformations and raise awareness of some of the common grammatical patterns found in Part 4 questions.

**Preparation:** Prepare cards as outlined below.

Prepare a card for each exam question – on one side write the question, on the other side rewrite the first given sentence so it becomes the question. For example:

I want to get fitter by starting a new sport.

**TAKING**

I want to improve my ..... a new sport.

Side A

I want to improve my fitness by taking up a new sport.

**STARTING**

I want to get ..... a new sport.

Side B

**Steps:**

1. Elicit/remind learners what they have to do in a Part 4 question. Put a simple sentence transformation on the board and elicit the answer and what changes have to be made. For example:

*I can't wait to see you again.*

**FORWARD**

*I'm really ..... you again.*

Highlight the changes that are made (*I'm really looking forward to seeing you again*).

2. Put the learners into pairs and give each pair six of the cards – ask them to put them on the desk with side A facing up. In each pair, learner A tries to do the first transformation while learner B can check if they got it correct by looking at the reverse side. When learner A gets side A correct they can turn over the card and try to do / remember the transformation on side B. Again, learner B can check if correct before moving on to the second card, which will be for learner B to solve.

3. Tell the learners not to write on the cards, but to use their notebooks for the answers, so you can build up a bank of these cards as the course goes on.

4. The learners should keep taking it in turns until they manage to complete both sides of all six cards. Stop the activity when the first pair has finished.

5. Feedback with the whole class – elicit the answers and highlight the various changes the learners made (in the same way as the **Part 4 familiarisation**).

### ★ Top tip

As the cards give the answers this is a great learner-centred activity that will help your learners review and remember some of the grammatical structures that appear in Part 4.

### Further practice

Here is another **lesson plan** to introduce the idea of paraphrasing and to practise sentence transformations.

## Part 5: Task familiarisation

**Aims:** To demonstrate the format of Part 5 and what is needed to get the correct answer; to raise awareness of distractors in multiple-choice questions.

**Preparation:** Print out copies of Part 5 without answers in the attached **Handout**.

**Steps:** You can use the answers and explanations below to show learners how this exam part works either before you do the **Part 5: Activity** or afterwards as further practice.

Here is an example of two questions from Part 5.

You are going to read an article about a sport called sandboarding, which takes place in the desert. Choose the answer (**A**, **B**, **C** or **D**) which you think fits best according to the text.

### My sandboarding adventure

16-year-old Jack Wilson swaps his snowboard for a sandboard among the desert dunes

- 31 { Once we arrived, I was impatient to get going. I couldn't be bothered to wait for instructions from the guides, so I grabbed a board and walked towards the dune. Despite the impression I hoped to create, I didn't have much success – far from it, in fact. Eventually, after admitting to myself I needed instruction, and practising on the smaller dunes, I took a deep breath and launched myself off the top of the largest sand dune. With a board strapped to my feet, and a strong determination to stay upright, I was soon hurtling downwards so fast, it almost took my breath away, while around me the sand dunes changed colour in the setting sun.
- 32 {

- 31 When describing his initial sandboarding attempts in the second paragraph, Jack
- A concludes that his lack of caution was responsible for his failure.
  - B mentions his embarrassment at having to get guidance from children.
  - C complains that the absence of any instruction left him at risk.
  - D admits that he may have tried to give a misleading picture of his skill.
- 32 When Jack eventually succeeded in sandboarding downhill, he
- A was surprised by the sudden speed of it.
  - B was proud of his determination not to give up.
  - C was amazed by his ability to remain standing.
  - D was so focused he couldn't take in the surrounding landscape.

## Part 5: Task familiarisation

### Answer key

- 31 ✗ Option A is incorrect as it wasn't a *lack of caution*, but rather a *lack of instruction* that was the problem, as Jack says *I needed instruction*.
- ✗ B is also wrong as there is no mention of the age of the guides.
- ✗ C is incorrect as Jack doesn't *complain* about the *absence of any instruction* – he admits he *couldn't be bothered to wait for instructions*.
- ✓ D is correct because a *picture* in the option means an idea of what something is like, or an impression of something and Jack says – *Despite the impression I hoped to create, I didn't have much success*.
- 32 ✓ Option A is correct as ... *soon hurtling downwards so fast* shows the *sudden speed* in the question, while *surprise* is expressed by the phrase *it almost took my breath away*.
- ✗ B is incorrect as Jack talks of his *determination to stay upright* rather than not to give up.
- ✗ C is wrong because, as we can see with option A, it's the speed rather than his ability to remain standing that amazes Jack.
- ✗ D is also incorrect as he was aware of the surrounding landscape: ... *around me the sand dunes changed colour in the setting sun*.

[Go to Part 5: Activity](#)



## Part 5: Activity

**Aims:** To develop and practise strategies for dealing with unknown vocabulary in a reading text.

**Preparation:** Print out copies of Part 5 without answers in the attached **Handout** or any other suitable text/a **B2 First for Schools Reading paper**.

### Steps:

1. After completing a Part 5 question, ask the learners if there were any words about which they are unsure of the meaning (there will probably be plenty!). Explain that they are going to try some strategies for trying to understand unknown vocabulary and ask them to choose 5–6 words from the text which they don't know the meaning of.
2. Tell the learners to look more closely at these words 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.? Learners can check **Cambridge Dictionary – word formation** for help with this.) Does it look similar to a word which learners know in another language?
  - 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?
  - c. Focus on **co-text**. Read the whole sentence carefully. 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, think about what 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. It is a good idea to demonstrate this first. Here is an example of how you might follow steps a–d above and what you might say, using the last sentence from the sample text in the **Part 5: Task familiarisation**.

... I was soon **hurtling** downwards so fast, it almost took my breath away ...

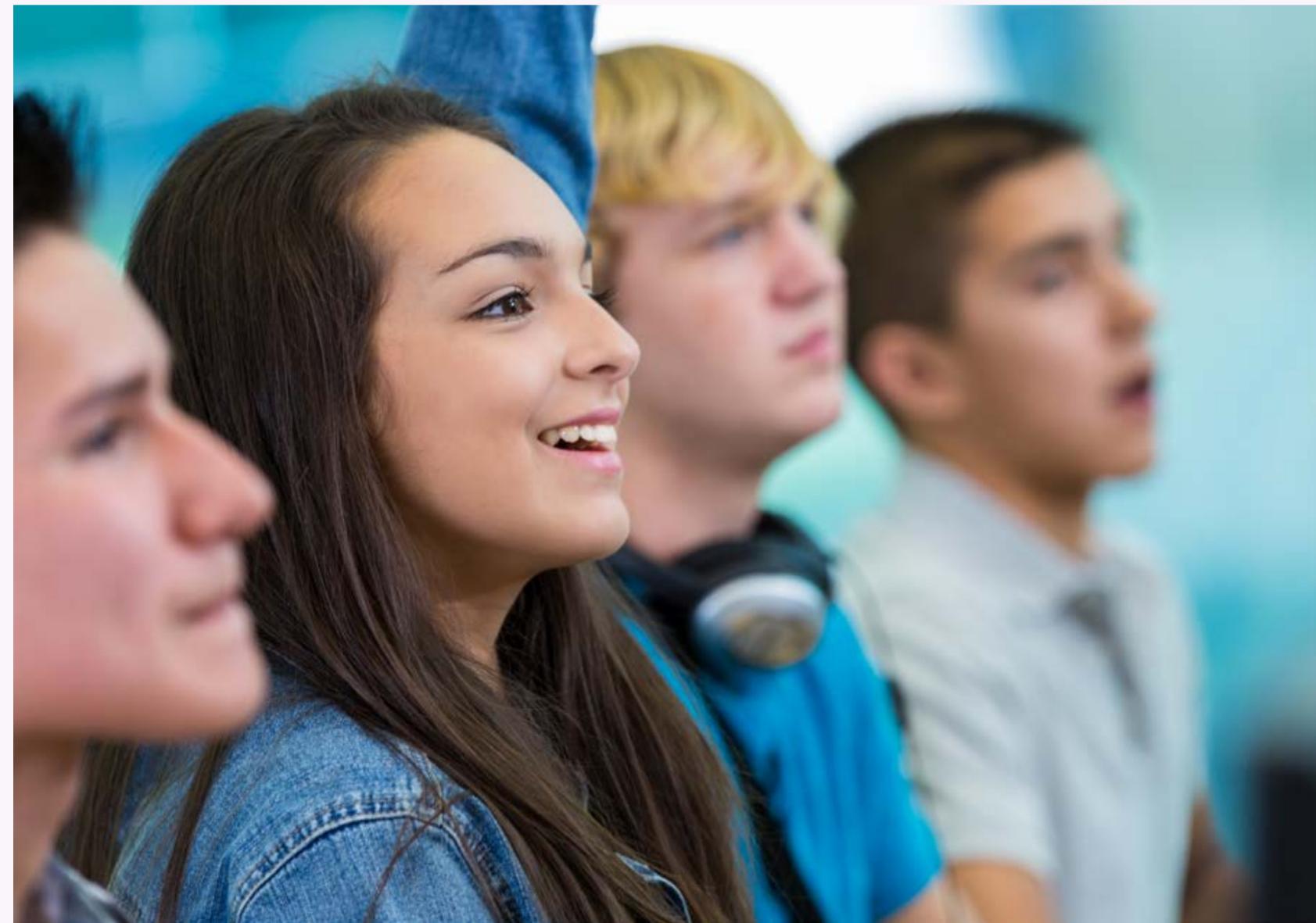
  - a. Focus on **form**: *hurtling* ends with *-ing* and *be* verb (*was*) comes before it – so I think it's a verb in the past continuous.
  - b. Focus on **use**: The word after *hurtling* describes a direction (*downwards*) and then the adverb *fast* so I think it is definitely a verb and perhaps it is a kind of movement.
  - c. Focus on **co-text**: The paragraph is about the writer's first attempts at sandboarding and the previous sentence says the writer ... *launched myself off the top* ... so that also matches my idea so far.
  - d. Focus on **meaning**: I guess that *hurtling* is a verb to describe moving very quickly – if I replace it with *moving* then the sentence works and makes sense.
4. Give the learners plenty of time to think about their ideas and to make notes as they go through step 2 for each of their words.
5. Ask them to check their ideas in **a dictionary** then share what they learned with another learner.

## Key terminology

**Co-text** is the word, or words, surrounding a particular word or passage within a text that provide context and help to determine meaning. *Co-text* is similar to *context* but *co-text* only refers to the text itself, whereas *context* includes aspects outside of the text itself.

## Further practice

Here is **another lesson plan** to help learners choose the correct answer and eliminate distractors in Part 5.



## Part 6: Task familiarisation

**Aims:** To demonstrate the format of Part 6 and what is needed to get the correct answer; to raise awareness of text cohesion.

**Preparation:** Print out copies of Part 6 without answers in the attached **Handout**.

**Steps:** You can use the answers and explanations below to show learners how this exam part works either before you do the Part 6: Activity or afterwards as further practice.

Here is an example of two questions from Part 6.

You are going to read a newspaper article about a major art project for schools. Choose from the sentences **A–G** the one which fits each gap (**37–38**).

### Art for schools

How would you feel if a priceless work of art suddenly turned up at your school and was put on show for a day? Believe it or not, that's exactly what happened where I study! It was all thanks to an educational initiative that involved lending great works of art to schools like mine.

In remote areas such as where I live, students find it difficult to visit major art galleries.

**37 C** Being given access to a masterpiece was a fantastic opportunity, which the organisers clearly recognised. I think the hope was that being so close to an original painting would raise our aspirations – and maybe even encourage some of us to become great artists ourselves one day!

The painting that came to our school was an original painting by the artist Claude Monet, of the northern French coastline. There was a great deal of sense of excitement and curiosity when a large white truck pulled up outside the school gates. **38 F** As a result, there was a great deal of speculation and many rumours were going around the school as to how the day would unfold!

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>A</b> Just watching it being unveiled in front of us was really moving.   | <b>E</b> It inspired us to go off to the art room and make something amazing.                    |
| <b>B</b> We were asked to identify the individual colours that had been used in it.                                | <b>F</b> For security reasons, we'd <b>only been given hints about what was in store for us.</b> |
| <b>C</b> <b>But this project meant we got to personally experience a great piece of art, which was incredible.</b> | <b>G</b> However, the general feeling was that these were easily outweighed by the advantages.   |
| <b>D</b> I have to admit I wasn't convinced that was absolutely right.   |  |

## Part 6: Task familiarisation

### Answer key

- 37** ✓ The correct answer is **C** as before the gap the text says ... *students find it difficult to visit major art galleries*, and option **C** starts with *but*, which shows the sentence is a contrast to the previous one. Sentence **C** goes on to describe the project as meaning *we got to personally experience a great piece of art, which was incredible*. After the gap *Being given access to a masterpiece was a fantastic opportunity* is a paraphrase of that.
- 38** ✓ The correct answer is **F** as before the gap the writer describes *a great sense of excitement and curiosity*, while after the gap says: *there was a great deal of speculation and many rumours*. The reason for all this is explained in sentence **F**. If something is *in store* (for someone) it means it is planned or likely to happen but the students hadn't been told everything (*only been given hints*) so that explains why there was so much curiosity and speculation in the school.

 [Go to Part 6: Activity](#)

### ★ Top tip

Tell your learners to always do another final check with Part 6 to see if the one option that has not been used (the distractor) fits in any of the gaps. If this can be ruled out then it's an extra check that the correct options have been chosen.

## Part 6: Activity

**Aims:** To practise identifying the parts of a text that will help to match the answers in Part 6.

**Preparation:** Print enough copies for your learners of the extra activity – cohesion puzzle in the attached **Handout** to use in step 3.

### Steps:

1. Ask learners the following questions about the strategies needed to answer a Part 6 question:
  - Do you think you should read the text quickly first? Why? (Answer: yes, to get an idea of what the text is about, how it is structured, and who the characters are).
  - What reading approach should you take when trying to find the answers?  
**A** Intensive, reading the text carefully around each gap. *or*  
**B** Scanning – looking for specific words or phrases to help you fill the gaps. (Answer: **A** Intensive – you have to read the text carefully both before and after each gap before deciding the answer.)
2. Tell learners that you are going to give them a puzzle based on a suggested strategy for Part 6. Emphasise to the learners that they need to read around the gap carefully so they can look for clues to solve the puzzle. Elicit examples for the parts of speech that will give them clues to the puzzle:

part of speech / grammar	suggested answer
names and pronouns	<i>Jane ... she ... this ...</i>
adverbs of time	<i>then ... Finally ...</i>
quotation marks	<i>"I couldn't believe it."</i>
contrast words	<i>however ... but ...</i>
verb tenses	<i>had gone ... will have finished ...</i>
cause and effect	<i>therefore ... as a result ...</i>
repetition	<i>in other words ...</i>

3. Give learners a copy of the **Part 6 extra activity** in the attached **Handout**. Tell the class they are going to practise identifying some of the clues which will help with text cohesion. Ask the learners to decide which option fits best in each sentence. Explain that some words and phrases have been highlighted to help them choose.
4. Feedback with the class, elicit learners' answers and highlight the points in the attached answer key as you go through them.
5. If you have already done the sample Part 6 question in the task familiarisation exercise, then ask the learners to look again to see if the answers have any of the clues in step 2 (Q37 has the contrast linker *but* and Q38 has the cause and effect pattern *as a result*).
6. Next time you do a Part 6 with your class elicit and remind them of the typical clues to look for.



## Part 7: Task familiarisation

**Aims:** To demonstrate the format of Part 7 and what is needed to get the correct answer; to raise awareness of paraphrasing.

**Preparation:** Print out copies of Part 7 without answers in the attached **Handout**.

**Steps:** You can use the answers and explanations below to show learners how this exam part works either before you do the Part 7: Activity or afterwards as further practice.

### Here is an example of five questions from Part 7.

You are going to read an article about four teenagers who play chess. For questions 43–47, choose from the sections (A or B). The sections may be chosen more than once.

#### Which person

feels the game only becomes truly interesting once more advanced tactics have been mastered?

43 A

is happy to research strategies in the game in order to improve?

44 B

warns that planning ahead is unlikely to guarantee success on its own?

45 A

appreciates the opportunity which chess offers to make good use of their time?

46 B

argues that even defeat can bring its own rewards?

47 A

#### A Harry

- 45 { There are so many possible moves in chess that you can't prepare for absolutely everything that'll happen – there's a lot more to it than just forward thinking, even though that is an essential skill. When entry-level players compete against each other, they tend to use fairly simple strategies, but as they start competing against more skilled players, they find their opponents will stop falling for those. For me, that's the point at which chess becomes a fascinating battle of ideas. You and your opponent both have an idea, and one of those ideas will turn out to be better, and win the game. Chess teaches you that every choice has consequences, and that a wrong move can be bad news, no matter how far in the lead you seem to be. Sometimes you win, sometimes you lose, but you always gain something along the way.
- 43 {
- 47 {

#### B Sophie

- 44 { While I'm not a great chess player, I love the constant challenge the game provides. There's nothing I like more than getting a new book on tactics, say, and settling down for a good read. To a chess lover, that can be as good as getting into a detective novel or thriller. And within the book's pages I might just find a great move that I can use in my next game. I'm aware, though, that even chess fans obsessed with the game don't always get my explanations for why I like it so much. I suppose some of them make sense only to me. But with chess, I never have a wasted moment. If I'm stuck somewhere, or I don't feel like playing my guitar, out comes the chessboard – real or electronic. Even my friends who don't play chess kind of get this. They might feel that way about one of their own hobbies.
- 46 {

## Part 7: Task familiarisation

### Answer key

- 43 ✓ A is the correct answer as Harry says, *when entry-level players compete against each other, they tend to use fairly simple strategies*, but when players ... *start competing against more skilled players ... that's the point at which chess becomes a fascinating battle of ideas*.
- 44 ✓ B is correct as Sophie says, *There's nothing I like more than getting a new book on tactics, say, and settling down for a good read*.
- 45 ✓ A is correct as Harry states that *There are so many possible moves in chess that you can't prepare for absolutely everything that'll happen ...*. He then goes on to say *there's a lot more to it* [playing chess] *than just forward thinking*.
- 46 ✓ B is correct as Sophie says, *But with chess, I never have a wasted moment. If I'm stuck somewhere, or I don't feel like playing my guitar, out comes the chessboard*.
- 47 ✓ A is correct as Harry says, *Sometimes you win, sometimes you lose, but you always gain something along the way*.





## Part 7: Activity

**Aims:** To practise using paraphrasing and synonyms as strategies to identify correct answers.

**Preparation:** Print out copies of Part 7 without answers in the attached **Handout** or any other suitable text/a **B2 First for Schools Reading paper**.

### Steps:

- Elicit what synonyms and paraphrasing are and ask the learners why they think they can help with Part 7 – emphasise that precise words and phrases in the questions will not appear in the part of the text with the answers, but instead there will be paraphrasing and synonyms.
- Give out the Part 7 questions and ask the learners to underline the key words and expressions before comparing ideas with a partner.
- Now ask the learners to work in pairs and to think of two or three sentences that mean the same as the question statements but to use different words/grammar. For example, from the **task familiarisation, question 47**:  
Which person ...  
argues that even **defeat can bring its own rewards**  
**Suggested answers:** *you can lose, but still get something / even if you lose you might achieve something / you may gain something when you don't win.*
- Get the learners to compare their sentences with another group, encouraging them to make a note of any good ideas the other group has.
- Give out the Part 7 texts and ask the learners to match the correct person and text. Remind them they are looking for the global meaning of the question statements not the key words.
- During feedback ask the learners how close their ideas in step 3 were to the actual text. Doing this stresses the value of the strategy and highlights the connection between the question statements and the text itself.
- Repeat this idea the next time you do a Part 7 Reading task, then, the third time try just brainstorming synonyms and paraphrasing for the first three or four questions in class together. This way your learners can be gradually introduced to this good habit and will start approaching the task with a better understanding of the process required.



## Further practice

Here is **another lesson plan** to give learners an overview of Part 7 of the B2 First for Schools Reading paper and to suggest strategies for tackling it.

## Extra resources

### Lesson plans and resources for teachers

- A variety of **free resources for preparing learners for Cambridge English Qualifications**
- Free **sample exams** and other preparation resources that you can give your learners
- Webinars for teachers on different levels and different topics**
- Handbook for Teachers** B2 First for Schools Handbook for Teachers
- Blog posts** on Cambridge English Qualifications, different levels and exams, different skills, technology and much more
- Kahoot! quizzes:
  - See some ready-made **Kahoots** for our learners ...
  - ... or see **our Kahoot! guide** for how to develop your own games.
  - Watch our **How to use Kahoots webinar** ...
  - ... or see **How to play a kahoot as a challenge**.
- Graded readers:** Cambridge University Press has a range of books with graded language levels for you or your learners to buy.

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