

FCE

Reading Sample Tests

PART 2

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PART 2

Comprehension: Missing Sentences

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SAMPLE 1

Choose the sentences which best fit the gaps.

1.....

Bill Gates, the head of Microsoft, the creator of Basic, MSDOS, Windows and Flight Simulator, is the richest man in America. If you lived to be 70, you would have to make \$100 million dollars every year of your life in order to come up with what Gates is currently worth.

2..... Gates himself draws a salary around \$300,000, about a tenth of that claimed by America's best-paid company heads.

He is a one-man band: he works 15-hour days and loses his temper easily. He is addicted to competition, and to winning. He enjoys poker and fast cars. 3.....

4..... By the time he was 16, he had already set up a company, and was making money from computing. Maths was his strong subject, important because it shares with programming the same ways of thinking. Gates was paid to debug the local mainframe, and he also offered a data-processing service to local authorities.

When the first PC appeared on the cover of Popular Computer in January 1975, Gates, then 19, phoned the manufacturer. He claimed he had a version of Basic for the 8080 microprocessor and was ready to do business. Working night and day, Gates and a friend squeezed the language into 4K with enough space left over to run a programme. 5..... The coding certainly required a high level of ingenuity.

Things were done so quickly that a bootstrap loader had to be written on the flight to deliver the completed tape. 6..... Gates never forgot how his Basic was immediately pirated by computer companies all over the world. He became a very sharp businessman indeed, unwilling to give anyone a free ride.

A typical example of the Gates technique can be demonstrated by his relationship with IBM. IBM split with Microsoft and produced its own version of OS/2 to compete with Windows.

7..... When OS/2 had to be Windows-compatible to stand a chance of survival, Microsoft released Windows 3.1 and made other changes so that IBM's product was compatible only with last year's model.

8..... They wear T-shirts and anoraks, eat pizzas and read sci-fi, but they know more than the difference between ROM and RAM, and they shall inherit the earth.

FCE Reading Sample Tests, Part 2

- A. It was a task so difficult that many claimed it was impossible.
- B. Above all, he is a technical whiz kid.
- C. It's a hard life competing against the new technicians.
- D. By a miracle, the tape worked when it was loaded.
- E. IBM is company whose management were tied to old technology.
- F. Of course, that wealth is largely the result of Microsoft's astronomical share price.
- G. Gates started early.
- H. But Microsoft makes money on every copy of OS/2 that IBM sells.
- I. How do you become a billionaire?

PART 2: Comprehension: Missing Sentences

Check your answers.

1. I
2. F
3. B
4. G
5. A
6. D
7. H
8. C

SAMPLE 2

Choose the sentences which best fit the numbered gaps.

ORGANISED CRIME

Big crime, like big business, seems to be much the same world- wide. It is all about money and, ultimately, breaking people's legs, whether in America, Russia or Japan.

Throughout America the Mafia is a powerful business entity, absorbing one per cent of the GNP of the world's largest economy. It deprives the US government of an estimated \$30 billion in lost taxes. 1..... It owns sections of the trucking, garment and construction industry in New York and other cities. It also controls the trade unions whose members work in these companies.

The American Mafia are not alone: glasnost has revealed that they have their exact Russian counterparts, perhaps not quite so glitzy, but still doing well. The Moscow correspondent of The Independent newspaper describes one of them: "Known as the Uncle, he is 73. He made millions of roubles by running underground textile factories all over the Soviet Union and could have retired long ago. 2..... The Uncle was a political prisoner in one of Stalin's labour camps in the Thirties. But he quickly realized that common criminals got better treatment, so he went over to them. He met all kinds of villains in the camps and learnt their skills. He last came out of jail in 1953. The police have not been able to nail him since.

"He has a good, three-roomed flat which is large and luxurious by Moscow standards. The outer door is reinforced with double metal plates. 3..... He dislikes ostentation but he cannot resist fashion. He wears his clothes well because daily tennis has left him looking an agile and well-kept 55.

"Like the classic mafia godfather, the Uncle is a family man, loyal to his wife, who, though 25 years his junior, is no longer pretty. His daughter has a pampered life and spends hours in front of a mirror. 4..... They fear even to brush the daughter's hand by accident. The Uncle has been known to hire hit men."

There is one important difference between the American and Russian mobs: the Russian mafia are more interested in the consumer goods that people in the West take for granted. 5..... One businessman had to arrange for three cars packed with colleagues to meet him and protect him when he arrived in Moscow from Paris with a small computer for his firm.

Like carrying samovars to Samarkand, such business would not interest the Japanese mafia, the yakuza. Japan has 80,000 yakuza, which, according to the Economist, is 20 times the membership of America's mafia. The rackets are the same: drugs, extortion, protection, gambling and prostitution. But the system is different: it is Japanese, and very orderly. Crime in Japan, like everything else, is done in orderly, organised groups. 6..... Instant trouble, probably fatal, would come to the intruder who tried to collect protection money from an already protected street market. No pickpocket would dare operate in a shopping centre protected by the yakuza.

The Japanese mafia are glorified as the modern equivalent of the samurai. Such glorification is found also in America and Russia. 7.....

- A. Gangs have their own pitches, their own lines of business.
- B. Organised crime is multinational.
- C. Inside, chandeliers light up the mahogany furniture, the porcelain, the expensive pictures.
- D. But he has moved with the times and is now trading in videos.
- E. The hottest item is a personal computer which sells for ten times its value in the West.
- F. But surely, a murderer is a murderer is a murderer, isn't he?
- G. It has moved into legitimate companies which provide a perfect mechanism for laundering illegal funds.
- H. The sidekicks who come and go, bringing crates of beer from the hard currency store.

PART 2: Comprehension: Missing Sentences

Check your answers.

01. G

02. D

03. C

04. H

05. E

06. A

07. F

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SAMPLE 3

Choose the sentences which best fit the numbered gaps.

DANGER AT SEA

Catastrophes at sea and in the air make grim headlines: they represent a great deal of sorrow for the families of the dead and injured. Why do they occur? 1..... Pyromaniacs light fires, as in the case of the ferry, Scandinavian Star, sailing from Norway to Denmark. In the week following that tragedy, there were two other cases of fires on board ferries: on one plying between Wales and Ireland, and on another between Portsmouth and Cherbourg. In both of them, a man died.

Clearly, fire is a commonplace hazard, and a very dangerous one, at sea. Talking after the Scandinavian Star had been towed into the small port of Lysekil, a Swedish police spokesman made it clear how awful it had been. He said: "The toll from the blaze that engulfed the ferry south of Oslo fjord is still officially 75 dead and 60 missing. 2..... People tried to save themselves in the cabins and they are lying in big piles and it's difficult to figure out how many there are. There are a lot of children."

3..... On board the Scandinavian Star, a fireman said the ferry had only one system to pump and spray water on to the flames and that pumping and spraying had to be done alternately. On a wider scale, newspapers reported once again on the world-wide system of "flagging-out" which means that ships are not registered in the countries where they operate, and where the regulations are strict and expensive, but in places like Panama and Cyprus and the Bahamas, where they are lax and cheap. The Scandinavian Star, although Danish-owned, was registered in the Bahamas.

One of the more outrageous cases came to light in October 1989. A general cargo ship named the Bosun set sail from Hamburg under the flag of the small central American state of Belize.

4..... They were charged with flying a false flag, and forgery of Belize government documents. A police officer said: "Belize was not the latest entrant in the cheap flag stakes; they in fact operate no shipping whatsoever. When we contacted the Belize High Commission in London, they were astonished to learn that a ship was pretending to be registered in their country."

Rules are laid down for ship safety by United Nations organizations. The rules are strict, and specify that a ship must be built with heat and fire resistant bulkheads, fire doors to passenger and crew areas, sealed cable and air conditioning trunking to block smoke, non-combustible materials and/or sprinkler systems, smoke detectors and alarms, and signposted emergency exits.

5..... He explains: "The big loophole is the lack of power to test whether these rules are being enforced. The port state is entitled to carry out spot checks on ships to make sure their safety certificates are in order; the lifeboats are all there and don't have holes in them; and that there are the necessary charts, life-jackets in the racks, and fire hoses in their reels. But they don't have the power to test whether they all work, or the crews know how to use them. I think the public has a right to be worried." He goes on to point out that the Scandinavian Star would have been built to a very high design standard. However, it is likely that neither her crew nor her safety equipment could have been checked in the Bahamas before she began carrying passengers.

Why do the ship-owners do it? According to the Secretary of the National Union of Seamen, the answer is cost. He says: "The Danish owners of the ill-fated Scandinavian Star could have registered her in Denmark and employed ratings belonging to the appropriate union.

6..... The ship would have come under the rigorous scrutiny of the Danish port inspectorate.

"But the inspectors might have insisted on potentially costly modifications and the ratings would have asked for Danish wages and accompanying social benefits. Much simpler (not to mention cheaper) to register her in the Bahamas and at a stroke free the owners from such irksome restrictions. 7....."

A. About 100 bodies have already been taken off the ship and as many as 50 to 100 could still be on board.

B. In the immediate aftermath of such catastrophes reports of inadequate safety measures circulate.

C. Among the survivors of this horrific tragedy there may be some ideologues who share this free-market philosophy, but I doubt it.

D. West German police arrested and charged two men, the ship's British master and its German owner.

E. These would have been properly trained in fire-fighting and lifeboat drills and been able to communicate with their officers and the passengers in the event of an emergency.

F. It is surprising that the insurance companies do not demand more effective crews and higher safety standards.

G. Terrorists plant bombs, as in the case of the destruction of the American airliner over Lockerbie in Scotland.

H. But all these rules of ship design are meaningless according to an expert from the Nautical Institute.

PART 2: Comprehension: Missing Sentences

Check your answers.

01. G

02. A

03. B

04. D

05. H

06. E

07. F

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SAMPLE 4

Choose the sentences which best fit the numbered gaps.

NEW YORK

A New York newspaper is inviting its readers to "give the gift of hate" in its classified advertisement columns. The Manhattan Pennysaver invites its readers to "slay a rotten neighbor, to badmouth the public figure of your choice, to spew forth your anger." Among entries on the hate page has been this missive from Janet to Jake: "Thanks for the wonderful dinner. After eating with your fingers, burping and passing wind all evening, I say, 'Find someone else to date that's your own species.'"

1.....

You cannot stay neutral about New York. 2..... As far as New Yorkers themselves are concerned, they love to hate it. For example, The New York Times last year ran a series of leading articles under the overall title: "New Calcutta: an occasional series". Several of the articles have dealt with homelessness and the need for public housing. A specific case is that of the mentally ill. In New York, as in London, many of the city's homeless are former occupants of mental institutions who have been put on the streets without adequate shelter provided for them in the city. No one knows exactly how many in New York have no homes to go to, but it is roughly estimated at 100,000. 3..... There are the weepers, those who sit with their knees drawn up, hand out, crying continuously. There are the ones who ask for big money: "Give me a hundred dollars," he cries. So you give him a quarter.

Everything in New York is extreme. It is a city of the incredibly rich and the miserably poor. For the rich, there are expensive private schools and hospitals, concert halls and theatres - although fewer of those than formerly - and restaurants. The poor are on a hiding to nowhere: all public facilities, schools and hospitals and housing, are deteriorating. 4..... There are 250,000 heroin addicts, 500,000 crack addicts, 400,000 carriers of the Aids virus.

Of all New York statistics, those concerning crimes of violence are most often quoted. About five people are murdered every day. The record for one day's killing was set on 9 July 1988 when 20 people were murdered. The total for any one year is going on 2,000. These are not the traditional gangland slayings. 5..... A typical killing occurred in the Bronx when a 14-year-old boy saw two friends being harassed by another teenager. When he tried to cool things down, the teenager pulled out a revolver and shot him. He was dead in seconds. In another case, a woman went to pull her child away from her apartment door because she knew that her flat mate's boyfriend was outside and angry. A blast from a shotgun ripped through the door, killing her.

The latest fashion in violence is called "wilding". Posses of teenagers often go on the rampage. Their most frequent victims are fellow blacks and Hispanics from the ghetto, violent and drug-infested neighborhoods which are no longer in anyone's control. 6..... The

strangest attacks have been on white women by gangs of black teenage girls: victims have reported being stabbed from behind by needles or pins, and some of them feared that they had been injected with an Aids-infected syringe.

New Yorkers routinely compare their city with Calcutta. But the comparison is unfair:

7..... It also has the know-how. In the early eighties, through the drive of one man, Richard Ravitch, the New York subway system was saved from total breakdown. Mr Ravitch, by huge efforts, raised the \$8 billion capital needed to clean the stations and trains of their graffiti, to lay down new track, and buy new, air-conditioned rolling stock.

What Washington has spent its money on is laser-guided weapons systems, and the other fancy hardware of the star wars programme, such as the free electron laser. A single research facility for the FEL, built in the New Mexico desert, has cost a cool billion. 8.....

- A. Has the American government got its priorities right?
- B. The streets are filled with beggars, or panhandlers, as Americans call them.
- C. New York has the wealth to do something about its problems.
- D. These are the result of casual violence combined with easy access to firearms.
- E. And from Susan to Ginger: "Darling, next bus out of town. Be under it."
- F. School-children from the ghetto commonly battle each other with knives and razors.
- G. The statistics of social breakdown make depressing reading.
- H. You either love it or hate it.
- I. Political action appears totally inadequate.

PART 2: Comprehension: Missing Sentences

Check your answers.

1. E
2. H
3. B
4. G
5. D
6. F
7. C
8. A

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