Chapter 5
Matching sentences to gaps in text

In this test method, you have to read a text from which sentences or, sometimes, short paragraphs, have been removed. The missing sentences are arranged in a jumbled order after the text, and your task is to reconstruct the text by selecting from a list of several options the right sentence to fill each gap in the text. The gaps in the text are numbered, while the choices given after the text are marked with letters. Note that, among the choices, there is always one extra sentence, which does not fit in any of the gaps.

This method tests your ability to see how a text is structured, and how it makes sense through its references backwards and forwards, as you will see in the explanations below.

In order to complete the task successfully, you will first need to have a general idea of what the passage is about, so a quick reading of the gapped text, without worrying about unknown words, is the first thing to do. While skimming through the text, try to note what information is given about the topic in each paragraph of the text, how the main ideas develop from paragraph to paragraph, and what you expect to come in the gaps. Then, you should look at each of the sentences in turn, and begin to match information in the sentences to information in different sections of the text, thinking about which sentence might come where.

However, you need now to read the text very carefully, because there are clues in the passage both before and after each gap. The development of ideas can be seen in different lexical and grammatical relations between sentences and paragraphs of the text and, therefore, you should pay careful attention to both lexical words and phrases, and grammatical structures that may indicate such relations in the text. Thus, for example, the repetition of certain nouns or adjectives, the use of synonym words and phrases, the use of one verb tense rather than another, the use of reference words, like personal pronouns (referring to either people or things), demonstratives *(this, those)*, possessives *(its, their)*, relative pronouns *(who, that, which)*, temporal markers (*when* or *while*), adverbs of frequency *(often, never),* of place *(here, there),* logical connectors *(besides, however),* or other linking words indicating contrasts *(but, while),* or reasons *(because, since)* – all might help you to see how information in the text is organized, and decide which sentence fits where in the text.

Once you have chosen a sentence to fill a gap in the text, it is a good idea to cross out that sentence from the list of choices given so that you are not tempted to put it elsewhere.

As with other task types, you are strongly advised to read the example (0), along with the title of the text.

Now you should try to do the Sample Task, the Founding of Philadelphia.

Sample Task

You are going to read a text about the founding of a city. Some sentences are missing from the text. Choose from the list (A-G) the most appropriate sentence for each gap (1-5) in the text. There is one extra sentence that you do not need to use. Write your answers in the boxes after the text. There is an example at the beginning (0).

THE FOUNDING OF PHILADELPHIA

The woodlands were alive with color when William Penn arrived for the first time, in 1682. It was late October, still the best time of the year in the Northeast. But he wasn't there to admire the countryside. *(0)* _____ He had already given it a name, of course. It was the same name as that of one of the early Christian cities in Asia Minor which, when translated, means "City of Brotherly Love". **(1)** _____ Penn borrowed the name from them because it suited perfectly the ideal community he had in mind.

The spot he picked, on the banks of the Delaware River, had a small harbor and a beach. **(2)** _____ What he wanted, he said, was a "green country town".

In his travels he had seen the great cities of Europe and hadn't always liked what he saw. **(3)** _____ His new city would have a plan for growth and that, he was convinced, would make it one of the great cities of the world.

For openers, he ordered that Philadelphia would have no crooked streets. **(4)** _____ He told his surveyors that he also wanted the roads to lead out of the city, so that it would be convenient to reach other cities yet unbuilt. **(5)** _____ He specified that no houses could be built within 200 paces of the harbor so there would be plenty of room for a future commercial center, and he asked that home builders center their structures on building lots "…so there may be ground on each side for gardens, orchards or field, that it may be a green country town which will never be burnt and will always be wholesome."

Harris: Pennsylvania

A   They would all be straight and wide, and they would all lead to the river.

B   It had been taken by a religious group in England, whose beliefs were similar to those of the Quakers, for an ideal community they had hoped to establish.

C   He pointed out that new streets would eventually have to be added and ordered that space be left for them before any land was sold for building.

D   Before arriving in America, Penn sent a letter to the Indians which he ended "I am your loving friend."

E   The land around it was high enough to provide a perfect place for a city and William Penn had a perfect city in mind.

F   There was work to be done; not least finding the right spot for the city that would be the centerpiece of his new colony.

G   He was also well aware of the cities that had already been established in the New World and knew they were growing without a plan.

Write your answers here:
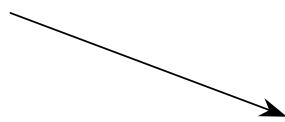
0	1	2	3	4	5
F					

Score: 5 points

Answer Key: Page 76

Answer Key to Sample Task: *The Founding of Philadelphia*

0	1	2	3	4	5
F	**B**	**E**	**G**	**A**	**C**

The example here is useful, because it begins to show you how the passage is being structured. The third sentence in the passage tells you what William Penn was *not* going to do, and so you can expect that the next sentence (F) will be about what he *WAS* there to do, and sure enough, the example tells us that there was work to be done, not simply admiring the countryside. The example also sets the theme for the passage: building a new city.

Item 1: The sentence before Item 1 is about the origin of the name of the city, and the sentence following the gap is also about the name, so the sentence to be fitted in must refer to a name. Sentence B begins with a pronoun "it" which could refer to "the name" (Notice that Sentence A begins with a plural pronoun "they" and so that could not fit in.) Also, Sentence B refers to a religious group – which links with the phrase before the gap "early Christian cities", and the sentence after the gap refers to "them", which could be the same people as the "they" in Sentence B. Sentence B thus fits perfectly into this gap.

Item 2: The sentence before Item 2 is about "the spot he picked", and a "harbor" and "beach" are mentioned. In Sentence E, there is mention of an "it", which could refer to "the spot" or even to "the beach". Also the use of the word "land" in Sentence E is linked to the words "spot", "harbour" and "beach" – all aspects of "land". The sentence after the gap refers to "a green country town", which is linked to Penn's idea, mentioned in Sentence E, of "a perfect city".

Item 3: The sentence before Item 3 refers to cities which Penn did not like, and the sentence after the gap refers to a "plan for growth". Thus Sentence G looks like a good candidate for this gap, because it mentions the word "plan" and, implicitly, the need for planned growth.

Item 4: The sentence before Item 4 ends with mention of "streets", and Sentence A begins with a plural pronoun, which could refer to streets. Sentence A also mentions the need for "straight and wide" somethings - an obvious contrast to the "crooked streets" of the sentence before gap 4 .

Item 5: The sentence after Item 5 talks about the need for space around the harbour ("no houses could be built within 200 paces of the harbor"), which links to the second half of Sentence C, which talks about space having to be left. Thus the idea of Sentence C fits into the meaning of the sentences that follow gap 5.