

## FCE use of English Part 3 – Key Word Transformations 'Top Tips'

### Example question

Many of the women suffered from a feeling of \_\_\_\_\_ (Help) when confronted with the powers-that-be.

Answer: helplessness

### Tip 1

The students will be given one continuous text with questions similar to the one above plus one example. They should change the word given in brackets at the end of the line, usually by adding prefixes and suffixes, so that it fits into the text both by meaning and part of speech. They will always need to make some changes, and often more than one - e.g. *harm* to *harmlessness*. In other words, just inserting the word given will never get a point.

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### Tip 2

As always, the first thing they should do is read the whole text first.

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### Tip 3

The words are always next to the line with the relevant gap, so stop students who think they have to try to find where each word should go.

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### Tip 4

After reading through the text they can start the task. They should first go with their instinct. If a word pops into their head it is probably right, especially with the students who read a lot in English (but see tips below).

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### Tip 5

If no ideas pop into their heads, or they wish to check their answers, they should think about what kind of word goes into each gap. This can be done using clues such as word order. For example, if there is an article preceding the gap, they will need to place a noun after it. If there is already a noun after the gap, then they will need an adjective etc. This can be practised without the distraction of worrying about meaning by using 'nonsense' words in the gaps. This can be done in the following manner: have lots of sentences with 'Doobeedoobeadoo' in them and have students say what part of speech it is in sentences like 'I wouldn't doobeedoobeadoo that if I were you'. Alternatively, identify the parts of speech in nonsense poetry like 'The Jabberwocky'.

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### Tip 6

Having ascertained what kind of word should go in the gap, students then have to come up with the actual word! If they are completely unfamiliar with it (which is not often the case) they can guess it by adding various prefixes and suffixes until they get something that sounds right and obeys the rules of word formation (see worksheet 2 for practise of this). Often, while they are doing this, they will hit on the right answer and suddenly realize that they were familiar with it after all, if only passively. This routine should also be used when you go through the answers.

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### Tip 7

Students won't lose points for wrong answers. But as they get no points if they make no changes (see above), they *must* alter each word.

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### Tip 8

If they have time (they usually will), students should read through the whole text again with their answers completed to make sure it makes sense and sounds correct. The type of mistake they will often pick up at this point is not changing words to the negative to fit in with the meaning of the text (for example, putting *helpfulness* in the example above - grammatically correct but nonsensical in this context).