

Blank fillers

by Elena Filimonova, Aislyu Ryukova & Dina Valieva

Activity type: Sentence completion**Student grouping:** Individuals and small groups of 3–4 students**Time:** 15 minutes approx.**Skills practiced:** Factual information comprehension, vocabulary review, sentence completion, production and accuracy**Materials needed:** One copy of the worksheet per student; several copies of the point cards per small group, cut up (optional)**Summary:** This vocabulary game helps students practise analyzing and utilizing the information given in a text, which is vital in sentence completion exam tasks.**Preparation**

Explain to students that the aim of the game is to fill in the blanks to create as many different versions of the sentences on the worksheet as possible, while also making the sentences relevant to the stated topic. Every grammatically and lexically correct sentence will be awarded a point.

How to play the game

Set a time limit of 5–7 minutes, depending on the level of your students. Hand out one copy of the worksheet per student. Students should work individually to think of as many words and phrases that will logically fit into the gaps in each sentence as possible, making sure they attempt each of the six sentences at least once. All the sentences should match the topic given (i.e. the environment, travel or culture) when complete, and the verbs, adjectives and nouns should all be used correctly.

When the time is up, put students into small groups. Hand out the points cards, if using. Students should present their sentences to their group, one at a time. Every correct sentence gets a point. Students can either pick up a point card from the pile, or they can simply mark their points on their worksheet. Circulate as the students share their answers, providing help and support where necessary.

When students have finished, find out who has the most points in each group; the student in the class with the most points overall is the winner.

Teaching notes

- You may wish to remind students that when choosing words or phrases, they are not simply picking something that works with the words either side of each gap; the whole sentence needs to make sense, when read aloud. If students seem unsure, you could do the first sentence together as a class, as an example.
- As an alternative way of playing the game, you could cut up the worksheet and give students just one section each, at random, challenging them to come up with, e.g., five different versions of each of the two sentences.
- This game is of great help as a review activity as it shows students' level of vocabulary knowledge (or lack of it) in each subject area. You could create your own sentences around a recently studied topic, or challenge students to create their own version of the game as a follow-up activity.

Example answersEnvironment

- Scientists *observed* a global increase in *temperature*, which proved to be *significant*.
- Professor Brown suggested, in addition, that the best way of dealing with *climate change* is to *burn less coal*.

Travel

- When the city grew *wealthier*, the local government decided to improve its *transport system* to better meet the needs of *tourists*.
- When they reached their *destination*, after a *lengthy* journey, they were *exhausted* but happy; they *departed* again after two days.

Culture

- A dictionary provides readers with *definitions* of words and phrases, as well as their *pronunciations*, while a thesaurus offers *collections* of words with similar meanings.
- The Mona Lisa is a *masterpiece* created by one of the most influential *artists* of all time. Most people believe the woman depicted is *smiling*.

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FUN WITH IELTS POINT CARDS

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Environment

Scientists _____ a global increase in _____ ,
which proved to be _____ .

Professor Brown suggested, in addition, that the best way of dealing with _____
is to _____ less _____ .

Travel

When the city grew _____ , the local government decided to improve its
_____ to better meet the needs of _____ .

When they reached their _____ , after a _____ journey, they
were exhausted but happy; they _____ again after two days.

Culture

A dictionary provides readers with _____ of words and phrases, as well as their
_____ , while a thesaurus offers _____ of words with similar
meanings.

The Mona Lisa is a _____ created by one of the most influential
_____ of all time. Most people believe the woman depicted is
_____ .