

FCE Reading Part Two - Gapped Text

An introductory class for the gapped text task- starting with a fun whole-class oral activity and moving on to a detailed examination of exam techniques.

Part of Exam: Reading Part Two - Gapped Text

Language/ Skill Practiced: Interpreting linking and referencing devices (e.g. 'however', 'them', 'these') in context.

Materials: 1 cut-up 'Mixed-up Story' per 5 to 15 students, and 1 photocopy of story per student (see worksheet for example)

Time: 30 to 50 minutes

Preparation: Photocopy the 'Mixed-up Story' (e.g. 'The Gorilla'- see worksheet). With 15 or fewer students this is a whole class activity, so the students will need one slip of paper each. In a class of 15 people, you can simply cut the worksheet along the lines, but with fewer students some of them will need a piece of paper including 2 or 3 sentences or clauses. If you don't know how many people will be turning up, simply cut it up for the minimum possible number in advance, and make a few more snips while the students are predicting the story (see below). If you would prefer to use another story (perhaps you don't share my sense of humour!), you can easily adapt other 'shaggy dog stories' or short newspaper articles by rewriting them. Such stories are easily found on the Internet. Reduce the story to 10 or so sentences, making sure there are lots of referencing and linking expressions still in it. Also make sure there is something in the story for students to work out, e.g. the last line, or if the story is true or not.

Procedure:

Part One: Warmer/ Lead In- 'Mixed-up Story' Oral Task

- Write the first and last lines of the story up on the board, including the gapped words at the end.
- Ask if anyone knows the story. If anyone does, ask them to keep quiet in the next stage.
- Put students in pairs and ask them to discuss what the whole story could be, and therefore to work out the last two words. Point out that each line represents one letter. (The answer is 'the dog', but it will be virtually impossible for them to predict the words at this stage, so be prepared to keep this part short.)
- Tell them that you are going to give them the middle of the story, and they must use this to work out the two words. Give them the 'bad' news, which is that you will give each of them only a part of the story and they must put it in the correct order *without showing each other their cards*.

- Hand out the cards, and explain any unknown vocabulary (e.g. 'private parts').
- Let the students start, and leave them get on with it. A good group will work out that the best way to do it is for people to stand up and move into a line in the same order as the story. More static classes might need pushing to do this if they start to get stuck.
- Monitor the activity to see if students talk about the language in the sentences, e.g. 'What does "it" mean?' or 'Who are "they"?'
- Stop the activity when the students think they have the two words, or if they get stuck at any stage.
- Give out the photocopies of the complete story. Give them one last guess of the ending of the story, then give them the answer.
- As a class, discuss *how* they put the story in order. Mention any discussion of language you noticed earlier (see above) and elicit ideas such as: 'linking words' (so, then, firstly), 'pronouns' (it, them) and 'articles' ('a' for a first mention and 'the' from then on).
- If students have already seen this part of the exam, ask them if this task reminds them of any part of the exam.
- Give out a Reading Part Three exam task (preferably with missing paragraphs rather than sentences), and explain that students are going to analyse the kind of language mentioned above to complete the exam task.

Part Two- Exam Skills

- Ask students to look at the first page of the exam task (the text with gaps) and underline all the language which they think will link to the missing information, such as definite articles and pronouns. They can work alone or in pairs. Go through this as a class.
- Now ask the students to do the same for the sentences which have been removed. There will usually be more linking and referencing expressions in these parts than in the text with gaps.
- Finally, ask students to find what each of the words and expressions links to / refers to in the text, and therefore complete the task by placing the missing parts in the correct place.
- Go through the answers, mentioning the underlined words or expressions at every stage. If students have followed the instructions they should easily have got most of the questions correct.

Variation: It is quite nice to start with an oral activity, as much of the rest of a reading class can be silent. Sometimes, though, it is easier to just hand out the mixed up story to pairs of students and let them sort it out on their desk and predict the last words. This is particularly true in a cramped classroom with fixed desks, or with large classes.