

Proficiency Listening Part 2 – Sentence completion

Teacher's notes, transcript and answer key

The following worksheet – taken from Mark Harrison's *New Proficiency Testbuilder*, and updated for 2017 – is intended to help your students prepare for Part 2 of the Listening paper of the Cambridge Proficiency Exam. The audio files can be downloaded from onestopenglish, and the transcript is included below for your convenience.

Transcript

Frank Hornby, creator of Meccano, was born in Liverpool in 1863. He was one of the seven children of provision dealer John Hornby and his wife, Martha. He married Clara Godfrey in 1887 and they had three children, two boys and a girl. Although Frank worked as a bookkeeper and cashier for a meat importer, and became chief managing clerk, he spent much of his spare time inventing things, a hobby stemming from childhood.

One of the books Frank had been given when a young boy, *Self-Help*, by Samuel Smiles, told the stories of famous inventors, and outlined the difficulties they faced before they reached success. It had a lasting influence on him. The story that fascinated him most was of Palissy, who invented a white glaze for earthenware, but had many failures on the way.

Deciding to be an inventor was one thing; how to set about it was another. He thought he might develop a machine to solve the problem of perpetual motion. Through experiments and study of the principles of mechanics, he learned many skills, but had to abandon the project and turn to other ideas, such as a submarine which, when placed on the water, submerged itself, was propelled for some distance underwater, but then, alas, failed to re-emerge.

He lacked adequate tools in his small workshop, but was never discouraged. As he gradually accumulated more tools, his ideas turned to interchangeable parts which could be used for a variety of purposes – here was the germ of the Meccano system.

After he and his wife Clara had boys of their own, he delighted in making mechanical toys for them. One Christmas Eve, during a long train journey, he thought of his workshop and the problem he had in getting small parts for a crane they were constructing. Later he wrote, 'I felt that what was required were parts that could be applied in different ways to many different models, and that could be adjusted to give a variety of movements by alteration of position, etc. In order to do this it was necessary to devise some standard method of fitting one part to any other part; gradually there came to me the conception of parts all perforated with a series of holes of the same size and at the same distance apart. Such parts, I realized, could be bolted up to a model in different positions and at different angles, and having done their work in one model could be unbolted and applied to another.'

Gradually his ideas clarified, but little did he think that they would change the rest of his life, and result in a hobby that would give hours of pleasure to boys of all ages, in all parts of the world.

Enthusiastically, he started to put his ideas into practice, first making strips from a large piece of copper, which was soft and easy to work. He decided that all the strips would be half an inch wide, with equal-sized holes along the centre at half-inch intervals. At first he made a strip two-and-a-half inches long, then a five-and-a-half inch strip and so on, up to twelve-and-a-half inches, which seemed to him an enormous part. The measurements have never been changed since.

Similarly, he had to make his own nuts and bolts, and his own angle brackets, axles and wheels – it was a long job, but it was a great day for Frank and his boys when they assembled their first Meccano crane.

He was so sure his system was good that he consulted a patent agent and obtained an English patent on 9th January 1901; foreign patents followed. His invention was originally called Mechanics Made Easy and was marketed by Hornby and his employer, D. H. Elliott, trading

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as Elliott & Hornby. The trademark Meccano was registered in 1907 and Elliott & Hornby was sold to Meccano Ltd in 1908, Hornby becoming a director. In 1914, Meccano Ltd moved to a purpose-built factory in Liverpool, the company's home until 1979.

Over the years, different Meccano sets were introduced, each set converting by means of an Extension Pack into the next larger-sized set. Eventually, there were over 300 individual Meccano parts. Hornby Clockwork trains arrived in 1920, electric ones in 1925.

Other products followed, including speedboats, aeroplane and car constructor outfits and Dinky Toys, which were launched in 1933. When he died in September 1936, aged 73, Frank Hornby was a millionaire.

Answer key

- 7 meat importer
- 8 *Self-Help*
- 9 submarine
- 10 interchangeable
- 11 series of holes
- 12 piece of copper
- 13 crane
- 14 *Mechanics Made Easy*
- 15 extension pack

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You will hear part of a radio programme about the development of a famous toy called Meccano. For questions 7–15, complete the sentences with a word or short phrase. In the exam you will hear the piece twice.

- 7 Frank Hornby worked for a _____ .
- 8 He was inspired by a book called _____ .
- 9 The _____ that he invented did not work properly.
- 10 He started to consider the idea of _____ parts.
- 11 He decided that the parts would need to have a _____ in them.
- 12 The first parts he made were from a big _____ .
- 13 The first object that was built with the new system was a _____ .
- 14 The first name given to the new toy was _____ .
- 15 Each Meccano set could be made bigger with the use of an _____ .