

The Borrowing Experiment

READING & USE OF ENGLISH | PART 7: GAPPED TEXT

YOUR TASK

Read the article. Six paragraphs have been removed. Choose from paragraphs **A–G** the one that fits each gap **1–6**. There is **one extra paragraph** you will not use.

01 / READING PASSAGE

A Library with a Difference

When Eva Moreno first suggested lending power drills from Westbridge Library, one colleague asked whether she was joking. The library had spent decades persuading people to return books on time; did it really want to add household equipment to the list? Eva's proposal was simple: lend useful objects that people needed only occasionally. But turning that idea into a reliable service was not as straightforward as she had imagined.

1 _____

That offer allowed the library to launch a trial with just a dozen items. Volunteers checked each object before it went on display, while staff wrote instructions that even first-time users could follow. Some things were rarely requested. Others were booked weeks in advance. Yet the borrowing figures were not what Eva remembered most clearly.

2 _____

These conversations soon exposed a contradiction. The scheme was designed to make expensive equipment available to people who could not justify buying it. However, most early borrowers were already confident using the library's website. Eva began noticing visitors who studied the display, asked about the equipment and then left without reserving anything.

3 _____

The team responded by introducing paper forms, allowing reservations at the counter and providing instructions in several languages. They also made it clear that no credit card was required. Soon the collection was being used by a much wider group of people. The change was encouraging, but it brought its own difficulties.

4 _____

Instead of purchasing more equipment immediately, Eva studied what people actually borrowed and when. Gardening tools were in demand for a few weeks in spring, whereas sewing machines were popular throughout the year. Shorter loan periods helped with some items; maintenance workshops helped with others. Even so, the borrowing records could not settle a more fundamental question.

5 _____

One afternoon, Eva watched a retired tailor show a student how to repair the lining of a coat. They were working beside a shelf of books on clothing and design, and soon three more people were contributing suggestions. No one had arranged a workshop; the exchange had happened spontaneously. For Eva, it provided an answer more persuasive than any committee report. Still, enthusiasm alone would not keep the scheme running.

6 _____

Six months after the trial began, the collection remained modest. Eva had no plans to fill the entire library with tools. She simply wanted the service to remain useful, affordable and open to the people who needed it. In her view, its greatest achievement was not the number of things borrowed, but the number of people who had found a reason to return.



Choose the missing paragraphs

Read all seven paragraphs. Only six belong in the passage.

A As word spread, a few popular items became increasingly difficult to reserve. The carpet cleaner was almost permanently on loan, while gardening equipment sometimes came back damaged or incomplete. Some staff argued that buying duplicates would be the quickest solution. Yet every new object would require storage, inspection and repairs, and the budget had not increased with demand.

B In fact, people often stayed at the counter long after returning an item. One borrower explained how to use a sewing machine to mend curtains; another passed on a technique for removing stains from upholstery. Staff noticed strangers swapping advice, and sometimes phone numbers, while they waited. A service intended to circulate objects was unexpectedly helping information circulate too.

C Meanwhile, the library was investing in a different kind of lending. Its digital collection had grown rapidly, and some readers were now borrowing more electronic books than printed ones. Staff held short classes to help visitors navigate the catalogue and download titles onto their phones. The programme attracted attention, although not everyone was convinced that digital services should become the library's main priority.

D Some members of the local council questioned whether lending objects belonged in a library at all. Surely its main purpose was to provide access to books and information? Others argued that helping people acquire practical skills was not a departure from that mission but another way of fulfilling it. The disagreement was less about drills and sewing machines than about what a public library should be.

READING TIP

Do not choose a paragraph just because it repeats the same topic. Check how it links to both sides of the gap.



The remaining options

Read E–G, then record your final answers below.

E The concerns began with practicalities. Who would check that the tools were safe? Where could they be stored, and what would happen if something broke? Staff had neither the training nor the time to inspect equipment between loans. Then a local repair group offered to take on precisely that work, provided the library started on a small scale.

F The team therefore developed a plan that did not depend entirely on goodwill. A small maintenance budget was set aside, experienced volunteers began training others, and every item was reviewed regularly to decide whether it was still worth keeping. The goal was not endless expansion but a collection the library could maintain without exhausting its staff or supporters.

G For some of these visitors, the barrier was surprisingly simple. The reservation system required an online account, and the instructions were available only in English. Others worried that a credit card might be needed if an item was damaged. None of these concerns meant that people lacked interest in the scheme; they meant that getting access required more confidence and resources than the staff had assumed.

03 / STUDENT ANSWER SHEET

Write one letter for each gap. You may use each paragraph once only.

GAP 1

GAP 2

GAP 3

GAP 4

GAP 5

GAP 6

CHECK BEFORE TURNING THE PAGE

Does every paragraph link to **what comes before** and **what comes after**? Are all reference words clear? Have you left one paragraph unused?



How the clues work: 1–3

Check your reasoning, not just the letter you selected.

1 → E

The practical problem

The opening describes doubts about lending equipment. Paragraph E explains those concerns: safety, storage and the staff's lack of time to inspect items. **After the gap**, the words "*That offer*" refer directly to the local repair group's offer to carry out inspections.

FOLLOW THE LOGIC Concerns → repair group's offer → trial begins

2 → B

A reference to conversations

The passage says borrowing figures were not what Eva remembered most clearly. Paragraph B explains why: visitors were sharing advice and experiences. **After the gap**, the words "*These conversations*" point back to the exchanges described in B.

FOLLOW THE LOGIC Borrowing figures → conversations → unexpected insight

3 → G

An explanation of a barrier

Just before the gap, interested visitors leave without reserving anything. Paragraph G gives the reasons: online accounts, English-only instructions and concerns about credit cards. **After the gap**, the library introduces paper forms, multilingual guidance and counter reservations to solve those exact problems.

FOLLOW THE LOGIC Problem → reasons → practical solutions



How the clues work: 4–6

One extra paragraph remains. Can you explain why?

4 → A

The difficulty of popularity

Demand has increased, bringing new difficulties. Paragraph A names them: long waiting lists, damaged equipment and pressure to buy duplicates. **After the gap**, “*Instead of purchasing more equipment immediately*” refers to that suggestion, before explaining Eva’s alternative approach.

FOLLOW THE LOGIC More demand → suggested purchases → careful planning

5 → D

A fundamental question

The text refers to an important question that borrowing statistics cannot answer. Paragraph D raises it explicitly: is lending tools part of a library’s role? **After the gap**, Eva witnesses people exchanging practical knowledge, which illustrates how the service fulfils an educational purpose.

FOLLOW THE LOGIC Question about libraries → example → evidence of value

6 → F

Making the scheme sustainable

The preceding paragraph ends by warning that enthusiasm alone will not sustain the project. Paragraph F describes the response: a maintenance budget, volunteer training and regular reviews. **After the gap**, the conclusion emphasises a modest, manageable collection rather than continual expansion.

FOLLOW THE LOGIC Need for sustainability → plan → modest long-term vision

THE EXTRA PARAGRAPH: C

Paragraph C focuses on digital lending. It is related to libraries, but it does not connect logically with both sides of any gap. **A shared subject is not enough.**