PRACTICE • PART 1 OF 4

Multiple-Choice Cloze

30-question challenge | Choose A, B, C or D for each gap. Circle your answers below.

The Art of Making Good Decisions

One of the difficulties facing anyone in a position of responsibility is knowing how much to **(1)** _____ on past experience. Although experience is invaluable, relying on it too heavily can prevent us from considering new approaches.

A promising proposal may be at **(2)** _____ with established practice, but that does not necessarily mean it should be rejected. Good decision-makers give due **(3)** _____ to the objections raised by others without allowing them to **(4)** _____ out unfamiliar solutions automatically.

In many situations, the aim is to **(5)** _____ a balance between caution and innovation. Short-term concerns sometimes **(6)** _____ precedence over long-term considerations, particularly when resources are limited.

Nevertheless, any important decision should be **(7)** _____ to review as circumstances change. Refusing to reconsider a decision simply because a great deal of time has already been invested in it can **(8)** _____ at a considerable cost.

No.	A	B	C	D
1	derive	draw	gather	extract
2	gaps	differences	odds	divisions
3	strength	weight	scale	pressure
4	rule	set	bring	carry
5	meet	settle	bridge	strike
6	make	put	take	bring
7	reliant	opposed	prone	subject
8	come	arrive	occur	arise

EXAM TIP

Look at the words immediately before and after the gap. The correct answer often depends on a collocation or fixed expression.

My score: _____ / 8

PRACTICE • PART 2 OF 4

Open Cloze

Read the text and think of the word that best fits each gap. Use only one word in each gap.

The Disappearing Art of Concentration

Little **(9)** _____ we realise how often our attention is interrupted throughout the day. A quick glance at a message or a brief look at social media may seem insignificant. However, it is not so much the length of these interruptions **(10)** _____ their frequency that matters.

Hardly have we settled down to a task **(11)** _____ another notification demands our attention. What makes matters worse is the extent **(12)** _____ which these interruptions affect our ability to think clearly.

There is no **(13)** _____ thing as a completely harmless distraction when we are trying to concentrate on something particularly demanding.

We stand little chance **(14)** _____ making real progress unless we set aside periods of uninterrupted work. It is worth turning off notifications, **(15)** _____ only for an hour at a time.

Rather **(16)** _____ treating concentration as something we can take for granted, we should regard it as a skill that requires regular practice.

> EXAM TIP
>
> Look beyond articles and prepositions. Think about auxiliary verbs, conjunctions, inversion and fixed grammatical expressions. Read the completed text once more.

My score: _____ / 8

PRACTICE • PART 3 OF 4

Word Formation

Read the text. Use the word given in brackets to form a word that fits each gap.

Giving Old Buildings a New Lease of Life

It would be **(17)** _____ (REAL) to expect every old building to survive indefinitely. However, the question of which structures deserve protection is often a source of **(18)** _____ (AGREE).

Some buildings are of little architectural **(19)** _____ (SIGNIFY), yet they provide an **(20)** _____ (REPLACE) link with local history and the lives of previous generations.

Unfortunately, the cost of maintaining such properties can be **(21)** _____ (PROHIBIT) high. In these circumstances, finding a new purpose for a building may be essential to its long-term commercial **(22)** _____ (VIABLE).

An **(23)** _____ (IMAGINE) approach to renovation can transform a disused factory into a library, a community centre or an exhibition space.

Such projects demonstrate that economic development and historical conservation need not be **(24)** _____ (COMPATIBLE).

> **EXAM TIP**
>
> Decide which part of speech is needed, then consider the meaning: positive or negative, singular or plural. Check your spelling carefully, particularly when adding prefixes and suffixes.

My score: _____ / 8

PRACTICE • PART 4 OF 4

Key Word Transformations

Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first. Use three to six words, including the given word. Do not change the given word.

25. I only realised how serious the problem was when I read the report.

UNTIL

It _____ the report that I realised how serious the problem was.

26. The company is unlikely to abandon its plans despite the criticism.

LITTLE

There _____ abandoning its plans despite the criticism.

27. We were not told about the change until the last minute.

DARK

We _____ the change until the last minute.

28. I had not expected the new software to be so difficult to use.

EXPECTED

The new software was more difficult to use _____.

29. The new regulations do not apply to employees who work from home.

EXEMPT

Employees who work from home _____ the new regulations.

30. It was only because Sara intervened that the negotiations continued.

FOR

Had _____ intervention, the negotiations would have come to an end.

EXAM TIP

Check that your answer preserves the meaning, fits the sentence and contains three to six words.

My score: _____ / 6

ANSWER KEY & EXPLANATIONS

Part 1 — Multiple-Choice Cloze

Check your answers, then read the explanations. Award one point for each completely correct answer.

1 **B — draw**

Draw on experience means to make use of knowledge or experience you already have. The other verbs do not normally combine with *on* in this sense.

2 **C — odds**

Be at odds with means to disagree or be inconsistent with something. The prepositions *at* and *with* help identify the expression.

3 **B — weight**

Give due weight to means to give something the consideration it deserves. Here, the objections should be taken seriously.

4 **A — rule**

Rule out means to eliminate something as a possibility. The text warns against rejecting unfamiliar solutions automatically.

5 **D — strike**

Strike a balance between means to find a satisfactory compromise between competing needs or interests.

6 **C — take**

Take precedence over means to be considered more important than something else. Here, immediate concerns may be prioritised.

7 **D — subject**

Be subject to review means that something may be examined and reconsidered. It does not mean that the decision must be changed.

8 **A — come**

Come at a cost means to involve an undesirable consequence, financial or otherwise. It is a fixed expression.

REVISION FOCUS

Record useful expressions as complete chunks: *draw on experience*, *strike a balance*, *take precedence over*. Write a new sentence with each one.

ANSWER KEY & EXPLANATIONS

Part 2 — Open Cloze

Check your answers, then read the explanations. Award one point for each completely correct answer.

9 **do**

When *little* begins a sentence with a negative meaning, it triggers subject–auxiliary inversion: *Little do we realise.*

10 **as**

Not so much X as Y emphasises the second of two things. Here, frequency matters more than length.

11 **when / before**

Hardly ... when (or *hardly ... before*) describes two events happening in quick succession.

12 **to**

The extent to which means the degree to which something happens or is true. *To* is the required preposition.

13 **such**

There is no such thing as is a fixed expression used to say that something does not exist.

14 **of**

The structure *stand a chance of doing something* takes *of* followed by a gerund (here, *making*).

15 **if**

If only for an hour means that the action is worthwhile even if it lasts just an hour.

16 **than**

Rather than introduces an alternative or contrast. Here, treating concentration as a skill is preferred to taking it for granted.

REVISION FOCUS

Practise inversion, dependent prepositions and fixed structures. Try covering the answers and completing the same text again in a few days.

ANSWER KEY & EXPLANATIONS

Part 3 — Word Formation

Check your answers, then read the explanations. Award one point for each completely correct answer.

17 **unrealistic**
An adjective is needed after *be*. The prefix *un-* makes *realistic* negative: it is unreasonable to expect every old building to survive.

18 **disagreement**
A noun is needed after *a source of*. The prefix *dis-* and suffix *-ment* form a noun meaning a difference of opinion.

19 **significance**
A noun is needed after the adjective *architectural*. *Significance* means importance or meaning.

20 **irreplaceable**
An adjective modifies *link*. The negative prefix *ir-* and suffix *-able* create a word meaning impossible to replace.

21 **prohibitively**
An adverb modifies *high*. *Prohibitively high* means so expensive that it prevents or discourages something.

22 **viability**
A noun follows *commercial*. *Viability* is the ability to succeed or remain sustainable. Note the spelling change from *viable*.

23 **imaginative**
An adjective modifies *approach*. *Imaginative* means creative or inventive; *imaginary* would mean not real.

24 **incompatible**
An adjective follows *be*. *Incompatible* means unable to coexist successfully. The expression *need not be incompatible* means they can coexist.

REVISION FOCUS

Build word-family notes, including negative forms and spelling changes. For example: *viable – viability* and *replace – replacement – irreplaceable*.

ANSWER KEY & EXPLANATIONS

Part 4 — Transformations

Award one point for each fully correct transformation. The official exam uses a different marking system.

25. was not until I read

It **was not until I read** the report that I realised how serious the problem was.

The cleft structure *It was not until ... that ...* emphasises when something happened. Also accept *was not until I had read*.

26. is little likelihood of the company

There **is little likelihood of the company** abandoning its plans despite the criticism.

The structure *there is little likelihood of* expresses improbability. Also accept *is little chance of the company* or *is little possibility of the company*.

27. were kept in the dark about

We **were kept in the dark about** the change until the last minute.

The idiom *keep someone in the dark about something* means to leave someone uninformed. Also accept *were left in the dark about*.

28. than I had expected

The new software was more difficult to use **than I had expected**.

The comparative *more difficult ... than* contrasts reality with expectations. Also accept *than I expected*.

29. are exempt from

Employees who work from home **are exempt from** the new regulations.

Be exempt from means not to be subject to a particular rule or obligation.

30. it not been for Sara's

Had **it not been for Sara's** intervention, the negotiations would have come to an end.

Conditional inversion *Had it not been for ...* is a formal alternative to *If it had not been for ....*

REVIEW & FURTHER PRACTICE

What does your score tell you?

Add up your scores from the four practice sections. Use the results to plan your next study session.

Part 1 • Multiple-Choice Cloze	_____ / 8
Part 2 • Open Cloze	_____ / 8
Part 3 • Word Formation	_____ / 8
Part 4 • Key Word Transformations	_____ / 6
TOTAL	**_____ / 30**

27–30: Excellent performance. Maintain your accuracy with regular practice.

22–26: Strong performance. Identify and revise the areas where you lost marks.

16–21: Targeted revision would help strengthen your grammar and vocabulary.

0–15: Work on advanced language structures and exam techniques step by step.

This is an informal practice challenge, not an official Cambridge assessment or a measure of your overall CEFR level.

Make your next study session count

Part 1: collocations and fixed expressions. Part 2: grammatical structures and prepositions. Part 3: word families and spelling. Part 4: paraphrasing and transformation patterns.

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