

TASK TYPE 1 Sentence Completion

LESSON OVERVIEW

This lesson looks at the Sentence Completion listening task which tests the ability to identify key information from a listening text. Students are required to fill in the gap in a number of sentences using information from the recording. Students have to listen for facts in the form of words and numbers.

- **Part A** of the lesson checks understanding of key points about the Sentence Completion task.
- **Part B** gives learners a short IELTS practice task and they can assess how they did.
- **Part C** gives useful tips and tactics for the task.
- **Part D** focuses on the specific skills students need for the Sentence Completion tasks and finishes with a realistic IELTS practice task.


A About the task

- 1 You can ask students to read this section for homework before the class or ask them to read it in class.
Elicit a few of the basic rules set out with bullet points about the sentence completion task.
Ask students to read the 'Notes' on Section A at the bottom of the page and find four mistakes.
Ask them to work in pairs and check their answers.
Conduct feedback with the whole class. More details about the numbers of speakers in each section can be found in the introduction on page 6.

Answers

- 1 NO—There may be one, two or three speakers.
- 2 YES
- 3 NO—The instructions tell you how many words to write.
- 4 YES
- 5 NO—You hear the same information, but the exact words are different.
- 6 YES
- 7 NO—You only hear it once.

B Sample questions

- 2  05 Tell students that they are going to practise doing a Sentence Completion task based on a listening text about the game of squash. Then ask students to complete the IELTS Practice Task.
Ask them to work in pairs, compare their answers and discuss any that are different. Point out that in 1 England must have a capital letter as it is a proper noun. Encourage them to try to explain how they got them.
Ask them to: 'Think about the information you have written, the number of words you have used, spelling, etc. Decide whose answer is best. Check your answers with another pair of students.'

▷ Extra help

For lower level students, give the answers for questions 1 (England) and 2 ((soft) ball) first. Ask them to find the relevant parts in the passage and say why these are the answers. Then ask them to continue on their own for questions 3–5.

▷ Extra idea

Have you ever played squash? What other similar games can you think of? How are they different from each other? What vocabulary do you need to talk about these games? *racquet, ball, court, net, score, game, match*

Answers

- 1 England
- 2 (soft) ball
- 3 wood
- 4 yellow
- 5 200/two hundred

Audioscript 05

The game of squash is essentially a variant of other racquet sports and is a close cousin of tennis and badminton. The game was developed at Harrow School in England in the nineteenth century, and soon spread to the USA and other parts of the world.

Unlike tennis, squash has no net, and the small court is surrounded by high walls against which the ball is hit. The word 'squash' was originally used to refer to the soft ball that is used in the sport. These are made of rubber and have to be 'warmed up' before a match because when they're cold, they don't have a great deal of bounce. Racquets were originally made from wood, although these days synthetic materials have become the norm.

Squash balls come in different qualities and a coloured dot tells you what type of player they are most suitable for. For example, a beginner's ball would have a blue dot, an advanced player's yellow, while an intermediate player would use a ball with a red dot on it.

When top players hit the ball, it typically flies through the air at a speed of 200 kilometres an hour, although the fastest recorded example is of a ball travelling at 280 kilometres an hour.

C Tips and tactics

- 3 You can ask students to read this section for homework before the class or ask them to read it in class.
Ask students to work in pairs and choose the three most useful tips in their opinion and compare their answers. Alternatively, ask them to divide the tips into three categories: *I already knew this, I didn't know this, I want more information about this*, and then compare their categories with their partner.
Ask students to work in pairs and discuss questions **a, b** and **c**.

▷ Extra idea

Refer students back to the Sample answers in B to see examples of some of the tips.

Question 1 is a good example of Tip 2. You are listening for the name of a country.

Question 2 is a good example of Tip 5. The missing noun must be singular because it is followed by 'is'.

Question 3 is a good example of Tip 11. You hear the word *material* so you know that the word you need to write is coming.

Question 4 is a good example of Tip 4, where the sentence tells you what to listen for (a country, a colour).

Question 5 is a good example of Tip 9 on writing numbers as figures.

D Skills-building exercises

- 4 Elicit from the class the type of information generally targeted in the Sentence Completion task. (Answer: as stated in A, often facts such as nouns and numbers). Tell students to read the sentences, look at each gap and the words around it and guess what type of information is missing.

Check answers and encourage students to explain how they found them. Ask: 'What grammatical or contextual clues did you use?'

Answers

- | | | |
|---|------------|--|
| 1 | a number – | The phrase 'a total of' gives you this clue. |
| 2 | a noun – | The article 'a' tells you it will be a noun. |
| 3 | a noun or | The gap will be a word that gives an adjective – you more information about the facilities in the conference centre. |
| 4 | a date – | The phrase 'in the year' gives you this clue. |

- 5 06 Tell students they are going to hear a short talk about a motorcycle museum. Ask them to read instructions 1–4, then listen once to the talk and write down the information.

Answers

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | 350/400/650 |
| 2 | a fire/museum doors reopened/restaurant was rebuilt |
| 3 | exhibition hall/restaurant/conference |
| 4 | 1896/1898/1902 |

Audioscript 06

The National Motorcycle Museum opened its doors on the first of October 1984, with a collection of more than 350 motorcycles on display. Since then, it has become the largest motorcycle museum in the world, with five exhibition halls containing 650 machines, fully restored to the manufacturers' original specifications. On the sixteenth of September 2003, the museum suffered a serious fire, resulting in damage to 75 per cent of the structure and some 400 machines. Due to the determination of the owners, staff and contractors, the museum doors

re-opened on the first of December 2004. As well as the exhibition hall, the museum also offers other facilities for visitors. The restaurant was also rebuilt in 2004 and now seats 950 diners, whilst the new conference centre offers state-of-the-art audio-visual equipment.

The museum's oldest exhibits are over a hundred years old. The oldest two-wheeler is actually a bicycle with an engine attached, which dates back to 1902. Even older still, however, is the Beeston motorised tricycle which was constructed in 1898 to celebrate the raising of the speed limit to 12 miles per hour in 1896.

- 6 06 Before students listen again, ask them to try to answer the questions based on their notes from Exercise 5. Ask them to underline the key information in each question. For example, in sentence 1, they need to listen for the number of motorcycles that the museum had when it first opened. Then play the recording again and complete the exercise.

Answers

- | | | | |
|---|----------------|---|----------------|
| 1 | 350 | 3 | audio(-)visual |
| 2 | (serious) fire | 4 | 1902 |

- 7 06 Ask students to listen again while reading the audioscript to confirm (or change) their answers. Ask why some of the words and numbers they hear are not correct. For example, they hear two numbers in the first paragraph: 350 and 650. 350 refers to the number of motorcycles at the museum when it first opened, and 650 refers to the number of motorcycles on display at the museum now. Then conduct a whole-class feedback.
- 8 Ask students to look at the photo and title. Ask: 'What is a *Brough Superior*?' (Answer: a famous old motorcycle). Note the pronunciation of *Brough* is 'uʃ' i.e. it rhymes with *rough*. Before they listen, ask them to predict the type of answer that they will need to write for each gap (e.g. a name, a date, a number, etc.) and underline the parts of the question that helped them to guess.

Answers

- | | | | |
|---|----------|---|---------------------------------|
| 1 | a year | 4 | a number/percentage or fraction |
| 2 | a noun | 5 | a noun |
| 3 | a number | 6 | a number |

▷ Extra idea

Look at the photo and try and name the parts of the motorcycle: *brakes, engine, exhaust pipe, fuel tank, gears, handlebars, headlights, seat, wheel.*


- 9 07 Ask students to read the instructions carefully. Ask them how many words and/or numbers they should write in each gap. (Answer: no more than two words and/or a number). Ask students to listen and complete the sentences.

Answers

- | | | | |
|---|--------------|---|-------------|
| 1 | 1938 | 4 | a/one third |
| 2 | speed record | 5 | weight |
| 3 | 51/fifty-one | 6 | 160 |

Audioscript 07

Welcome to the National Motorcycle Museum. Today I'm going to tell you the story of an incredible motorcycle. It's called the Brough Superior and was designed by a man called George Brough, who was one of the early pioneers of motorcycle construction. During the early 1900s, George Brough set up a workshop in the English city of Nottingham. He soon developed a reputation for producing motorcycles that were not cheap to buy, but which performed to very high standards. The first Brough Superior was built in the year 1919 and continued in production until 1940, and you can see one here in the museum that was built in 1938. The bike was an instant success and by 1922??? Brough himself was competing in races at the world-famous Brooklands racetrack. At first, Brough's fellow competitors laughed at his careful attention to detail as he got his beautiful bike ready for the race, but their attitude changed after he'd not only come first, but also broken the speed record for the track. Suddenly the Brough Superior was news and soon came to be the bike of choice for celebrities and adventurers. Brough, meanwhile, went on to win 51 of the 52 races he went in for, being denied victory in the last one only because he fell off, although the bike went on to cross the finishing line without him! Brough produced around 3,000 superior machines over a twenty-year period until the factory ceased production in 1940. Those that are still in existence, and that's around a third of them, are now mostly to be found in private collections. Every new Brough Superior motorcycle was specifically built for its owner, the design taking into account how tall that person was, his weight and also his particular style of riding a motorbike. The new bike was then test ridden to ensure that it performed to specification, and was personally certified by George Brough. The SS100 model was ridden at 160 kilometres per hour or more before being handed over to its new owner, whilst the SS80 model was ridden at 130 kilometres per hour or more before delivery. If any motorcycle did not meet specification, it returned to the workshop for refit until it performed properly. Often compared to a Rolls Royce car, in terms of fit and finish, the Brough Superior was the most expensive road-going motorcycle in the world.

- 10**  **07** Ask students to listen again while reading the audioscript to confirm (or change) their answers. Then elicit answers for questions 1 and 2 as a whole-class feedback.
- 11** This exercise highlights some common errors that candidates make in the IELTS Test. Ask students to decide why the student's answers were wrong. Point out that even though they have identified the correct information, their answer could still be marked wrong if they write an extra word or make a spelling mistake. Remind students it's very important to check their answers carefully in the time provided.

Answers

- 1** More than two words – write numbers in figures not in words, e.g. 1938
- 2** Wrong information
- 3** Three words – don't copy words that are already in the sentence, e.g. 'a new'.
- 4** Three words – don't include information that is already in the sentence, e.g. 'around' means the same as 'approximately'.
- 5** Spelling – 'weight' not 'wait'.
- 6** Wrong information

IELTS PRACTICE TASK 08

Give students 30 seconds to read questions 1–10, underline key information, and try and identify the type of information that is missing in each gap before they listen.

Play the recording and ask students to answer questions 1–10 under exam conditions.

Remind students to listen carefully to the examiner's instructions on the recording.

You may wish to direct students to transfer their answers onto a separate piece of paper once they have finished in order to add to the realism. You could then ask them to swap their papers with a partner and mark each other's answers. This can be a worthwhile exercise as sometimes students don't see their own errors (spelling mistakes, for example).

Ask students: 'How are questions 1–4 different from 5–10?' (Answer: 1–4 are separate sentences and 5–10 is a continuous text.)

▷ Glossary

A **beaver** is a large rodent that lives in and around water in Europe and in North America. It has thick brown fur, webbed feet, and a broad flat tail and it is known for building dams.

Answers

- 1** sixteenth/16th – The speaker mentions two different centuries, – but only one completes the sentence with the correct information.
- 2** water quality – Listen for the word 'improve' – it matches 'make better' in the sentence.
- 3** four/4 – The phrase 'a total of' tells you that you're listening for a number.
- 4** monitoring programme – The phrase 'what's called a ..' tells you that you're listening for a specific term.
- 5** internship – Eileen says that she's not 'an employee' the word 'internship' tells us her role in the project.
- 6** biodiversity – Eileen tells us that this is her 'speciality'.
- 7** building – Three types of behaviours are mentioned – but Eileen is only studying one of them.
- 8** boat – Eileen mentions two forms of transport – but she only used one of them that evening.
- 9** measure – The word 'to' before the gap tells us that we are listening for a verb.
- 10** camera trap – The words 'what's called' tell you that you're listening for a term.

Audioscript 08

You will hear an announcement about a wildlife project in Scotland. Look at the task, then listen and answer questions 1 to 4.

The Scottish Beaver Trial is a unique and exciting 21st-century conservation project. It is the first official project of its kind in Britain and a groundbreaking study to explore how beavers can enhance and restore natural environments. Wild beavers have been reintroduced back into Scotland after being extinct for centuries. Beavers are a native species to the UK, hunted to extinction in the sixteenth century.

So why have these animals been reintroduced? One reason is that beavers are known as a 'keynote' species. This is because they create ponds by building dams, which can help to improve water quality – something which has wider benefits for the local environment.

The beavers were released into Knapdale Forest in Scotland in 2009. They have since been busy settling into their new home; building lodges and nurturing newborn family members. Four beaver families have now been reintroduced and visitors are welcome to explore this beautiful woodland and spot the signs of beaver activity. The trial will continue for five years.

Throughout the trial, to assess the effect beavers have on the local environment, a scientific monitoring programme will be carried out. The results of the trial will help decide the future of beavers in Scotland.

You will hear a woman called Eileen talking about her work on the Scottish Beaver Trial project. Look at the task, then listen and answer questions 5 to 10.

Hallo, my name's Eileen and I've come along to tell you about my work with beavers. I'm not actually an employee on the Scottish Beaver Trial project, but I work alongside the team because I'm actually doing a two-month internship as part of the first year of my Masters degree at university. I'm specialising in biodiversity and I'm very interested in seeing animal species conservation projects like the one here at Knapdale. Working on a reintroduction trial like this is a great opportunity. All aspects of beaver behaviour are being studied here, and some people are studying feeding behaviours, others reproductive behaviours, whereas my project is to compare the building behaviours of the four beaver families. Beavers are surprisingly interesting animals. I had not studied them before coming here and I was really impressed by what they can do. I've been very lucky and I saw beavers on the first day. You can see the beavers from the bank of the lake, and we have a hide there, which you can reach by bicycle, but we went out at night in a boat and we saw some beavers swimming around the lodge. One of them popped up really close – just a few metres in front of me.

I help Rob, the SBT Field Officer with fieldwork tasks, which is very interesting, and allows me to discover the beautiful area of the Knapdale forest. He has to monitor various aspects of the beavers' environment, and build up a database. My part in that project is to measure every beaver construction, such as dams and lodges. It wasn't easy to figure out how to do this in a standardised method, but I managed to find a way. I'm now using a camera trap to try to get some video footage of beavers at work, which I can then study carefully. I'm even beginning to recognise the individual animals.

▷ Self-evaluation

Ask students how they feel about the Sentence Completion task. Ask them to complete the checklist. Further practice is available on the DVD-ROM.

1 Q FOCUS ON ARTICLES

► There is a photocopiable worksheet of this activity on page 227.

Point out to students that the sentence completion task often requires students to listen for concrete nouns, and an awareness of articles may help students to complete the sentences correctly.

- Write the summary of the listening passage from the IELTS Practice Task on the board or hand out Worksheet 1.
- Ask students to complete the notes with *a*, *an*, *the*, or *no article*.
- Match the words (1–8) with the rules about article use. The rules can be used more than once.
- Check answers.

The Scottish Beaver Trial

Beavers are ¹ ____ native species to ² ____ UK, hunted to extinction in ³ ____ sixteenth century. They create ponds by building ⁴ ____ dams, which can help to improve ⁵ ____ water quality. The beavers were released into Knapdale Forest in ⁶ ____ Scotland in 2009. Throughout ⁷ ____ trial, to assess the effect beavers have on the local environment, ⁸ ____ scientific monitoring programme will be carried out.

Rules

- Indefinite article (*a/an*) – this comes before any member of a group of things
- Indefinite article (*a/an*) – something mentioned for the first time
- Definite article (*the*) – this comes before a specific thing that people know about or that has been mentioned before
- Definite article (*the*) – this comes before a country which includes words like *kingdom*, *states*, or *republic*
- No article (*the*) – this comes before an uncountable noun
- No article – this comes before a plural noun
- No article – this comes before a proper noun

Answers

- a* – Rule **a**
- the* – Rule **d**
- the* – Rule **c**
- no article* – Rule **f**
- no article* – Rule **e**
- no article* – Rule **g**
- the* – Rule **c**
- a* – Rule **b**

► For more information and practice of articles, see Unit 8 in the Grammar Resource Bank, Student's Book pages 310–311.