

Part 4: Key Word Transformations

Description

In this part of the Use of English you have to transform sentences. You are given a lead-in sentence, a key word and a second, incomplete sentence. You have to complete the second sentence with **2 – 5** words, including the key word, so that it has a similar meaning to the lead-in sentence. You must not change the key word. Some sentences may have more than one possible answer.

This part of the exam focuses on both vocabulary and grammar and tests your ability to express a message in a different way. For example the sentence

It'd be a good idea if you took an umbrella.

could also be expressed in the following ways:

You should take an umbrella.

You'd better take an umbrella.

If I were you, I'd take an umbrella.

Note that this part of the exam tests **a wide range of** lexical patterns and grammatical structures.

Examples

Below you will find an example for the areas which are frequently tested. First read the example and complete the second sentence with 2 – 5 words, including the key word, so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence. Then read the feedback, which will show you the correct answer and explain why this answer is correct. Note that you will usually have to make two changes to the sentence:

1. Change of tense (I go, I went, I'm going, etc.)

She started to play football when she was ten.

PLAYING

She _____ she was ten.

Feedback:

The correct answer is '**has been playing football since**'.

You need to change the sentence from past simple to present perfect to say that she is still playing football. Because of the key word 'playing', you need the present perfect continuous:

has been playing football

You need the preposition 'since' to say when the activity started:

has been playing football since

2. Comparisons ('more', 'most', 'than', etc.)

We had not expected the holiday to be so cheap.

CHEAPER

The holiday _____ we had expected.

Feedback:

The correct answer is '**was cheaper than**'.

You need the verb 'be' before 'cheaper'. Since the context refers to the past, you need the past simple 'was'. You also need to change the sentence from negative to positive so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence:

was cheaper

You need the preposition 'than' after the comparative 'cheaper':

was cheaper than

3. Degree words ('so', 'such', 'too', etc.)

After watching the horror film, I was too frightened to sleep.

THAT

After watching the horror film, I was _____ not sleep.

Feedback:

The correct answer is '**so frightened that I could**'.

You need the structure 'so + adjective + that':

so frightened that

You need to add a subject and a verb after 'that', in this context 'I could':

so frightened that I could

4. Active / Passive (was built, were made, etc.)

A 16-year-old girl has won this year's writing competition.

WON

This year's writing competition _____ a 16-year-old girl.

Feedback:

The correct answer is '**has been won by**'.

Note that the second sentence starts with 'This year's writing competition'. This means that you have to change the sentence from active to passive. Note that the first sentence is in the present perfect ('has won'):

has been won

You need the preposition 'by' to introduce the person who does the action in a passive sentence:

has been won by

5. Have something done

A travel agency always organises our holidays.

HAVE

We always _____ a travel agency.

Feedback:

The correct answer is '**have our holidays organised by**'.

Note that the second sentence starts with 'We'. This means that you need the structure 'have + object + past participle' to say that the travel agency organises your holidays for you:

have our holidays organised

You need the preposition 'by' to introduce the person who does the action, like in a passive sentence:

have our holidays organised by

6. Reported speech and questions (she said that, he asked that, etc.)

'Have you seen my mobile phone?' David asked me.

SEEN

David asked me _____ his mobile phone.

Feedback:

The correct answer is '**if I had seen**' or '**whether I had seen**'.

The second sentence starts with 'David asked me'. This means that you need to change the sentence from direct question to indirect question. The word order in an indirect question is 'linking word + subject + verb'. You need the linking word 'if' or 'whether' before a yes/no question:

if / whether I had seen

The second sentence is introduced with the past simple 'asked'. This means that you have to change the tense:

have seen (present perfect) → **had seen** (past perfect)

6. Reported speech and questions (she said that, he asked that, etc.)

'I'm sorry I'm late,' said Peter.

APOLOGISED

Peter _____ late.

Feedback:

The correct answer is '**apologised for being**'.

Note that 'I'm sorry' changes to 'Peter apologised'. You need the preposition 'for' after the verb 'apologise':

apologised for

You need the gerund (-ing) of the verb 'be' after the preposition 'for':

apologised for being

7. Conditionals (if I had, I would, etc.)

We missed the beginning of the play because we arrived late at the theatre.

IF

We would have seen the beginning of the play _____ late at the theatre.

Feedback:

The correct answer is '**if we had not arrived**' or '**if we hadn't arrived**'.

The key word is 'if' and the second sentence talks about an imaginary situation in the past. This means that you need the structure 'if + past perfect':

if we had ... arrived

The second sentence starts with 'We would have seen the beginning of the film'. This means that you need to change the sentence from positive to negative so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence:

if we had **not** arrived

8. Hypothetical situations (I wish, I regret, etc.)

Julia regrets not having learned to play an instrument when she was a child.

WISHES

Julia _____ to play an instrument when she was a child.

Feedback:

The correct answer is '**wishes that she had / she'd learned**' or '**wishes she had / she'd learned**'.

The context tells you that Julia didn't learn to play an instrument in the past and she regrets this now. You need the structure 'wish + past perfect' to express this meaning:

wishes (that) she had learned

You need to change the sentence from negative to positive so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence:

wishes (that) she had learned

9. Modal verbs and patterns (could, ought to, should, have to, etc.)

It was wrong of you to lie to your parents.

OUGHT

You _____ your parents the truth.

Feedback:

The correct answer is '**ought to have told**'.

You need the preposition 'to' after 'ought':

ought to

'It was wrong of you' refers to an action in the past. This means that you need the structure 'have + past participle' after 'ought to'. You also need to use the verb 'tell' with 'the truth':

ought to have told

9. Modal verbs and patterns (could, ought to, should, have to, etc.)

The guard told us that we couldn't take photos in the museum.

ALLOWED

The guard told us that we _____ photos in the museum.

Feedback:

The correct answer is '**were not allowed to take**' or '**weren't allowed to take**'.

You need the verb 'be' before 'allowed'. Since the context refers to the past, you need the past simple 'were'. You also need the negative form:

were not allowed

You need the infinitive of the verb 'take' after 'were not allowed':

were not allowed to take

10. Linking words and phrases ('even though', 'if', 'in order to', etc.)

I studied very hard because I wanted to pass the exam.

ORDER

I studied very hard _____ fail the exam.

Feedback:

The correct answer is '**in order not to**'.

You need the linking phrase 'in order to'. You don't need the pronoun 'I' after 'in order to':

in order to

The second sentence ends with 'fail the exam'. This means that you have to change the sentence from positive to negative:

in order not to

11. Phrasal verbs

We couldn't discuss all the points on the agenda because there was no time left.

RUN

We couldn't discuss all the points on the agenda because we _____ time.

Feedback:

The correct answer is '**had run out of**'.

The phrasal verb 'run out of' means 'no more left':

run out of

The context refers to an action in the past. This means that you have to use a past tense. Since the key word is 'run', you need to use the past perfect 'had + past participle':

had run out of

12. Fixed phrases and collocations

The music festival is held in summer every year.

PLACE

The music festival _____ in summer every year.

Feedback:

The correct answer is '**takes place**'.

The fixed phrase 'take place' means 'be held':

take place

The context tells you that the music festival is held in summer every year. This means that you need to use the present simple of 'take'. The present simple after 'he' / 'she' / 'it' needs an '-s':

takes place

13. Grammatical patterns after words (be – to be – being)

I'd rather you didn't smoke in here.

MIND

Would _____ in here?

Feedback:

The correct answer is '**you mind not smoking**'.

The verb mind is followed by the gerund (-ing):

mind smoking

The context tells you that you don't want the other person to smoke. You need the structure 'would + subject + mind + not + gerund (-ing)?' to express this meaning:

you mind not smoking

14. Word formation (possible – possibility – impossible)

'How high is Mount Everest?' the teacher asked the children.

WHAT

The teacher asked the children _____ Mount Everest was.

Feedback:

The correct answer is '**what the height of**'.

Note that the key word is 'what'. You need a noun after 'what'. The noun of the adjective 'high' is irregular:

what ... height

You need to add 'the' and 'of' to the noun 'height':

what the height of



Tips to score!

How to approach the task

Here are some tips to help you deal successfully with this task:

- **Read the sentence.** Read the lead-in sentence, the key word and the second sentence carefully. Ask yourself:
 - 1) Which parts of the first sentence do you need to change? Highlight these parts to help you focus on them.
 - 2) What type of change do you need to make? Do you, for example, need to use a conditional, a phrasal verb or a gerund (-ing)? Remember that you will usually have to make two changes to the sentence.
- **Include the key word.** Remember that you must include the key word in your answer and that you must not change the key word.
- **Write between 2 and 5 words.** Remember that you must write between 2 and 5 words including the key word. Some sentences may have different possible answers, but make sure that you write only one answer.
- **Be careful with contractions.** You can use contractions but remember that they count as two words, for example 'didn't' = 'did not'. The only exception is 'can't' (= 'cannot'), which counts as one word.
- **Don't change the meaning.** Make sure that you do not change the meaning of the sentence by adding unnecessary information. In this example from above, the word 'very' is unnecessary. Note that by adding 'very' you not only change the meaning of the sentence, but you also write 6 words:

Nowadays, shopping is easily done online.

EASY

Nowadays, it is very easy to do shopping online.

- **Check spelling.** Check that your spelling is correct.
- **Make sure it makes sense.** When you have finished, read both sentences again to make sure that the second sentence has a similar meaning to the first sentence. Also check that you have included the key word and that you have written between 2 and 5 words.