

PTE Academic Lesson Plan Ideas: Test Taking Strategies

Lesson 11 – Reading: Fill in the blanks

Time allocated: 40 minutes

Step 1: Introduce the Item Type

This item type assesses reading skills and requires test takers to use contextual and grammatical cues to complete a reading text by identifying the single correct answer for each blank.

In the text below some words are missing. Drag words from the box below to the appropriate place in the text. To undo an answer choice, drag the word back to the box below the text.

Considering their lingering reputation as man-killers, it's hardly surprising that hackles are raised any time someone brings up the idea of wolves to the Scottish Highlands. Debate on this topic has been raging for years; would like to see the Highland environment returned to its natural state. Opponents the animals' for killing livestock.

proponents	reacquainting	propensity	reintroducing	cite
activitists	accuse			

Step 2: Present the Item Type Strategies

Strategy 1

First read the whole text quickly to make sure you understand the general topic and meaning.

Strategy 2

Look at the context around the gap and try to predict the word or type of word that could logically fill each gap before you look at the word options.

Strategy 3

Look at and analyze the options. Choose the one that best matches your predictions.

Step 3: Explain and Practice Each Strategy

Strategy 1

Explain to your students that for this item type it is important to quickly skim the whole text first to get an overall sense of the meaning. When we read gapped texts quickly for gist, our mind automatically predicts and fills in gaps in our reading with logical information.

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities:

- Give each student a copy of the text for Item 1 without the word options.
- Ask students to quickly skim the text in 1 minute and then tell you the gist.
- Provide comments on your students' ideas and confirm the answer (reintroduction of wolves into Scottish countryside).

Strategy 2

Tell your students that once they have established the gist of the text, they should read it through again without looking at the word options. This time they should try to predict the word or part of speech that is needed to fill each gap.

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities in pairs:

- Ask students to read the text again and work with their partner to predict the word or part of speech that is needed to fill each gap.
- Go through each sentence one-by-one, asking students to share their ideas and explain their thoughts (e.g., sentence 1 needs a verb in *-ing* form; sentence 2 needs a subject, looking at sentence 3 gives a clue that it should perhaps be a subject that counterbalances/is an antonym for "opponent"; sentence 3 needs a present tense verb and a noun).
- Display and discuss possible options.

Strategy 3

Looking at each gap in turn, students should analyze the options to see how or whether each one matches their earlier predictions, and pick the options that are best matches grammatically or in terms of meaning.

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities in pairs:

- Show the word options for Item 1.
- Ask students to work together to analyze the options according to the predictions that they made in the previous activity. Tell them to look for words that match their predictions in terms of meaning and part of speech.
- Provide comments on students' responses, and then display the answers for Item 1.

Step 4: Respond to a (Reading) Fill in the Blanks Item

Explain to your students that they will now respond to a test item simulating the test conditions. Remind them of the three strategies covered in this lesson and ask them to apply these strategies.

Give out copies of Item 2, and tell them that they will have three minutes to complete the text.

Step 5: Provide Feedback

Ask your students if they were able to use the strategies. Which one was the most difficult to apply? Which one do they think was the most useful? Ask students to compare and evaluate each other's responses in pairs or groups. After they have done this, show the answers for Item 2 and have students discuss why these answers are most appropriate.

Item 1

In the text below some words are missing. Fill in the blanks by writing the words in the blanks.

Considering their lingering reputation as man-killers, it's hardly surprising that hackles are raised any time someone brings up the idea of wolves to the Scottish Highlands. Debate on this topic has been raging for years; would like to see the Highland environment returned to its natural state. Opponents the animals' for killing livestock.

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Item 1: Answer Key

Considering their lingering reputation as man-killers, it's hardly surprising that hackles are raised any time someone brings up the idea of wolves to the Scottish Highlands. Debate on this topic has been raging for years; would like to see the Highland environment returned to its natural state. Opponents the animals' for killing livestock.

Item 2

In the text below some words are missing. Fill in the blanks by writing the words in the blanks.

A charge often leveled against organic agriculture is that it is more philosophy than science. There's some truth to this indictment, if that is what it is, though why organic farmers should feel about it is itself a mystery, a relic, perhaps, of our fetishism of science as the only tool with which to approach nature. The philosophy of natural processes precedes the science of understanding them.

supportive

mimicking

logic

repeating

credible

defensive

Item 2: Answer Key

A charge often leveled against organic agriculture is that it is more philosophy than science. There's some truth to this indictment, if that is what it is, though why organic farmers should feel about it is itself a mystery, a relic, perhaps, of our fetishism of science as the only tool with which to approach nature. The philosophy of natural processes precedes the science of understanding them.