Gapped Text

Growing above the street

Complete original B2 First exam-style task. Independent practice material, not an official Cambridge paper.

You are going to read an article about a roof garden. Six sentences have been removed from the article. Choose from sentences A-G the one which fits each gap (1-6). There is one extra sentence which you do not need to use.

Our community centre had a flat roof that caught the sun for most of the day. From the upstairs windows, it looked like wasted space, and several neighbours suggested growing vegetables there. The manager liked the idea but would not allow us to start simply because we were enthusiastic. Before anything was bought, qualified professionals checked the roof and access arrangements. We waited impatiently for their written advice.

(1) _____

These areas became the starting point for our design. The permitted space was smaller than we had imagined, so we chose a few large boxes rather than covering the roof with pots. Following the advice we had received, we also needed to keep the boxes off the roof surface so water could move underneath. None of us had suitable supports or knew where to get them cheaply.

(2) _____

These supports solved the problem without taking up much more space. Once the boxes were in position, we filled them and planted lettuce, beans and herbs. At first everyone was eager to visit. Sometimes three volunteers watered the same plants on one day, while nobody came the next. Each person assumed that the others would somehow know what had already been done. The plants needed a more reliable system.

(3) _____

The simple record made the gaps in our timetable clear. People could check it before watering and leave a message if they could not come the next day. However, another difficulty remained. Two members who had helped design the garden found the stairs increasingly uncomfortable. They could no longer attend our discussions, which usually took place beside the boxes, and felt that they were losing their place in the group.

(4) _____

That change allowed both members to stay involved, even when they could not visit the plants themselves. One organised seed orders and the other wrote updates for the centre's noticeboard. Their contribution reminded us that gardening was not only physical work. By July, the first lettuce was ready, and a different question arose: who should receive it? Some people wanted a single harvest day, but several regular helpers would be away.

(5) _____

This arrangement meant that missing one particular Saturday did not mean missing the harvest altogether. We kept enough herbs for a shared meal at the centre as well. It was a cheerful evening, although the garden had not produced everything we had expected. Strong winds had damaged the beans, and one shaded corner had grown very little. We realised that a sunny afternoon in spring had given us an incomplete picture of the space.

(6) _____

Those notes would show where water collected, which corners lost the light first and how often the wind became a problem. Meanwhile, the roof would remain open for suitable visits, and the group would keep meeting downstairs. Our first season had produced fewer vegetables than we had hoped, but it had taught us how to work together. We were already looking forward to trying again with a more realistic plan.

A

To make those visits visible to everyone, we hung a watering chart beside the door.

B

We therefore decided to spend the winter observing conditions and recording them before choosing the following year's crops.

C

A carpenter then offered to build low wooden stands for the boxes.

D

Instead of picking everything at once, we agreed that each helper could take a small amount when it was ready.

E

Their report explained which parts of the roof could safely carry the extra weight.

F

The council asked us to close the roof permanently after discovering damage to the building.

G

We moved the weekly meeting downstairs so that they could still help plan the work.

Your answers

1 _____ 2 _____

3 _____ 4 _____

5 _____ 6 _____

Answers & explanations

Question 1 | E - Sentence E

E connects the professionals' "written advice" before the gap to "Their report". The report identifies safe parts of the roof, so "These areas" afterwards refers to precisely those places. C also concerns construction, but stands cannot explain a report or identified roof areas. F introduces permanent closure, which conflicts with the garden being built and the roof remaining open later. Match both the backward reference and the next sentence, not just the shared topic of roofs.

Question 2 | C - Sentence C

C supplies the missing supports: the volunteers have neither suitable equipment nor an affordable source before the gap, and the carpenter offers wooden stands. "These supports" immediately afterwards refers to those stands. E concerns the location of safe areas, not objects that lift boxes. A introduces a chart, which cannot keep boxes above a roof surface. The physical purpose before the gap and the referring phrase after it identify C.

Question 3 | A - Sentence A

A answers the watering problem: volunteers do not know who has visited or watered the plants. The chart records those visits, and "The simple record" after the gap names the same chart. B also involves recording information, but it concerns winter conditions and next year's crops, whereas this paragraph needs a record of current volunteers' actions. The notes about checking before watering make A the precise link.

Question 4 | G - Sentence G

G responds to the two members being unable to manage the stairs. In G, "they" refers to those members, and moving the meeting downstairs explains "That change" after the gap. Their new planning roles then follow naturally. D concerns sharing vegetables, not access to discussions. F would close the roof for everyone and provides no solution for keeping these two members involved. Follow the people referred to by they and both members.

Question 5 | D - Sentence D

D contrasts a single harvest day with taking small amounts as they become ready. The reason before the gap is that some regular helpers will be away; the next sentence confirms that missing one Saturday will no longer mean missing all the vegetables. "This arrangement" refers to the flexible sharing rule. G also describes an arrangement, but changing a meeting location would not solve the harvest-timing problem.

Question 6 | B - Sentence B

B links the disappointing beans and shaded corner to a plan to observe the roof over winter. "Those notes" after the gap refers to recording conditions, and the listed observations concern water, light and wind. A's watering chart records visits, not these seasonal conditions, and its earlier function has already been explained. F is unused: permanent closure would contradict the following statement that the roof remains open and the intention to grow again. Reconstructed in order, the article moves from safety and equipment to teamwork, harvest and planning.