Word Formation

Giving old things a second life

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

Change each word in capitals into one word that fits the passage. Check meaning and spelling before checking your answers.

Last Saturday, our library held its first repair café. The event was so (0) successful (SUCCESS) that the organisers have already planned another one.

Before the doors opened, a team of (1) _____ arranged tables and tools. Each visitor received a short (2) _____ of the safety rules. We were asked to wait (3) _____, without complaining, while someone checked our broken objects.

At first, I thought my old radio was (4) _____ to repair: three shops had already told me that nothing could be done. However, a local engineer found a simple (5) _____ to the problem and had it working in minutes. She explained each step so (6) _____ that everyone could follow her instructions.

By the end of the afternoon, more than twenty objects were ready to use again. Keeping them out of the bin meant a (7) _____ in household waste. I also left with a much better (8) _____ of how everyday objects work. Next time, I plan to bring a friend and stay for the whole afternoon.

Your answers

1 VOLUNTEER _____

2 EXPLAIN _____

3 PATIENT _____

4 POSSIBLE _____

5 SOLVE _____

6 CLEAR _____

7 REDUCE _____

8 UNDERSTAND _____

Answers & explanations

Question 1 | volunteers

VOLUNTEER -> volunteers.

A team consists of several people, so 'a team of' needs the plural noun volunteers here. Add -s to volunteer. Voluntary is an adjective and cannot name the people in this gap.

Question 2 | explanation

EXPLAIN -> explanation.

"Each visitor received a short explanation of the safety rules." The article a and adjective short introduce a singular noun. Explain is a verb; its noun is explanation, with no i after the a. Simply adding -ation to explain gives the incorrect spelling explaination. Read the whole noun phrase: a short explanation, but an explanation if short is omitted.

Question 3 | patiently

PATIENT -> patiently.

The gap describes how visitors should wait, so it needs an adverb. Add -ly to the adjective patient. 'Without complaining' supports patiently, rather than the negative form impatiently.

Question 4 | impossible

POSSIBLE -> impossible.

The shops had said that nothing could be done, so the writer initially believed the radio could not be repaired. The adjective must therefore be negative: impossible. Possible takes the prefix im-, not un- or in-.

Question 5 | solution

SOLVE -> solution.

'A simple' needs a singular noun, and the usual phrase is 'a solution to a problem'. The verb solve changes to the noun solution. Do not use solving after 'a simple' in this phrase.

Question 6 | clearly

CLEAR -> clearly.

We need to describe how the engineer explained the steps, so the adjective clear becomes the adverb clearly. The result, 'everyone could follow her instructions', confirms the positive meaning. Keep the r before -ly.

Question 7 | reduction

REDUCE -> reduction.

The article 'a' needs a singular noun. Repairing the objects created less waste, so we need reduction, in the phrase 'a reduction in waste'. Notice the spelling change from reduce to reduction; it is not reducetion.

Question 8 | understanding

UNDERSTAND -> understanding.

In 'a much better ... of', the gap names the knowledge the writer gained. Add -ing to understand to make the noun understanding. Here it is a noun, not part of a continuous verb tense.