Gapped Text

A route worth reconsidering

Full exam-style task: six paragraph gaps and seven options, with one unused paragraph. Original independent practice, not an official exam paper.

Six paragraphs have been removed from the article. Choose from paragraphs A-G the one which fits each gap (1-6). There is one extra paragraph which you do not need to use.

When our walking club was asked to recommend a route between the station and the nature reserve, we chose the riverside path almost without discussion. It was direct, attractive and familiar to everyone on the committee. We drafted a leaflet describing it as a route for the whole community, then invited residents to try it before publication.

(1) _____

Her question was perfectly reasonable, yet none of us could answer it. We knew the path so well that we had stopped noticing the entrance. We postponed the leaflet and arranged another walk, this time asking participants to point out anything that made them hesitate, even if experienced walkers considered it obvious.

(2) _____

These coloured marks soon formed a pattern. Problems clustered around changes of direction, not along the long straight sections we had expected to improve. A promising solution was to put signs at the confusing junctions. Before ordering them, however, we took our marked-up map to the landowner responsible for the riverbank.

(3) _____

That seasonal restriction changed the project completely. A route that worked only in dry weather could not be advertised without qualification. We needed an alternative that remained available when the lower section was closed, but our first attempt at a diversion involved a long climb behind the sports ground.

(4) _____

The shorter connection avoided the climb and gave us a workable wet-weather route. Permission was confirmed in writing, and we tested the surface after heavy rain rather than assuming that a dry-day inspection was enough. There was still a difficulty: explaining two routes on a small leaflet without making the map almost impossible to read.

(5) _____

The two versions let us compare actual mistakes instead of defending personal preferences. Participants using the single map repeatedly missed the point where the routes separated. Those using the paired maps found the appropriate route more easily, provided the opening sentence made the choice clear. We adopted that design and printed a small first batch.

(6) _____

The number at the bottom of the page now has a purpose. Each new batch records its revision date, and the library keeps a simple list of changes reported by walkers. We still enjoy the riverside path, but we no longer present our familiarity with it as proof that everyone else will find it easy. A route becomes welcoming through repeated attention, not through a reassuring phrase on its cover.

A

Rather than settle the design argument in a committee meeting, we made two rough prototypes. One placed both alternatives on a single map; the other put a small map on each side of the paper. We gave them to separate groups of first-time visitors and asked each group to explain which route they would follow after a week of rain.

B

We expected a conversation about permission to attach signs to fences. Instead, the landowner showed us photographs of winter flooding and explained that a section beside the footbridge had to close whenever the river reached a particular level. Nobody on our committee had used that section during those months, so our supposedly comprehensive description contained a significant omission.

C

The final choice of route was made entirely by the committee, which decided that testing would take too much time. We agreed to remove the alternative path from the design and advertise the riverside walk as suitable in all conditions. Our confidence returned as soon as the leaflet had been sent to the printer.

D

One participant arrived with a pushchair and stopped before we had even left the station forecourt. She could see a sign pointing towards the reserve, but the path began behind a row of parked bicycles. Was that narrow opening really the entrance, she asked, or were we about to take a shortcut that visitors were not supposed to use?

E

Publication did not bring the work to an end. Within a fortnight, someone reported that a recently installed fence had made one instruction confusing. We could correct the next printing easily enough, but people also needed to know which edition they were holding. We added a version number and a date, treating the leaflet as something that would continue to change.

F

At this point a groundskeeper offered information that no online map had given us. A narrow link between the sports ground and a public lane was normally unlocked, and its surface had recently been repaired. He suggested asking the sports club to formalise access, rather than sending walkers up the hill simply because the familiar road appeared on every map.

G

Each person carried a copy of the draft map and a pencil in a different colour. We asked them to circle the places where they were uncertain what to do next, then write down the question they would have liked a sign to answer. This produced much more specific information than asking whether people had enjoyed the walk.

Your answers

1 _____ 2 _____

3 _____ 4 _____

5 _____ 6 _____

Answers & explanations

Question 1 | D - Paragraph D

D introduces the participant and her question about the concealed entrance. "Her question" immediately after the gap must refer to an actual woman asking something; D supplies both. The first paragraph's invitation to residents leads naturally to her arrival. G describes the later feedback method, not the original incident, and cannot explain the singular reference her.

Question 2 | G - Paragraph G

G answers the preceding plan to collect moments of hesitation by giving each walker a different-coloured pencil. "These coloured marks" after the gap refers directly to their circles on the maps. A also involves testing, but its two design prototypes belong to the later leaflet stage and provide no coloured marks.

Question 3 | B - Paragraph B

B develops the visit to the landowner into an unexpected discovery about winter closures. "That seasonal restriction" afterwards refers to the river-level closure B introduces. The signs mentioned before the gap are picked up in B's opening. F concerns another piece of land and access permission, but offers no seasonal closure to explain the following sentence.

Question 4 | F - Paragraph F

F solves the stated problem of a diversion involving a climb by introducing a repaired link beside the sports ground. "The shorter connection" and the later written permission follow from that suggestion. B also concerns access, but describes the flooded path already rejected, not a usable connection avoiding the hill.

Question 5 | A - Paragraph A

A introduces two leaflet designs and a practical comparison, answering the difficulty of showing two routes clearly. "The two versions" after the gap refers to these prototypes, and the subsequent findings compare exactly the single-map and paired-map designs. G's different colours are a route-observation method and do not produce two layout versions.

Question 6 | E - Paragraph E

E follows the small first print run with a reported change and the introduction of a version number. "The number at the bottom of the page" then has a clear antecedent. C cannot fit: it says testing was abandoned and the alternative removed, contradicting both the observed tests and the adopted design. C is the unused paragraph; its shared vocabulary does not overcome those factual conflicts.