Multiple Choice Cloze

Reading the town archive

Full exam-style task: eight multiple-choice cloze gaps, with four options each. Original independent practice, not an official exam paper.

For questions 1-8, choose the answer A, B, C or D which best fits each gap.

A box of letters donated to the town archive promised to (1) _____ light on an argument about the old railway station. Local historians had long disagreed about why it closed, but its manager had kept his private correspondence (2) _____ lock and key. Now the records were available to everyone.

One researcher immediately took (3) _____ with the popular claim that falling passenger numbers alone explained the decision. However, the team refused to (4) _____ conclusions before comparing the letters with official accounts. Some details were clearly at (5) _____ with newspaper reports written at the time. Rather than dismissing either source, the researchers asked what each writer had been in a position to know.

The investigation eventually called several familiar assumptions into (6) _____. It also demonstrated why documents should be read in their wider (7) _____: a complaint addressed to an employer may serve a different purpose from a private message to a friend. The team now advises visitors to (8) _____ the temptation to treat a single striking quotation as the complete explanation of a complicated event.

Your answers

1	A bring	B shed	C give	D spread
2	A beneath	B below	C under	D within
3	A issue	B trouble	C exception	D objection
4	A make	B draw	C take	D put
5	A conflict	B contrast	C difference	D odds
6	A query	B debate	C question	D argument
7	A extent	B distance	C context	D surroundings
8	A refuse	B deny	C oppose	D resist

Answers & explanations

Question 1 | B - shed

B - shed: "shed light on an argument" means make it easier to understand. A bring would need something such as bring information to light, a different construction. C give light normally concerns illumination and does not form give light on an argument. D spread goes with light over an area, not this explanatory expression.

Question 2 | C - under

C - under: "kept his private correspondence under lock and key" means kept it securely locked away. Beneath and below can describe a lower physical position, but neither forms this fixed expression. Within would mean inside and also fails to complete the idiom. The following sentence contrasts the previous restriction with the records now being publicly available.

Question 3 | A - issue

A - issue: "took issue with the popular claim" means disagreed with it. B take trouble would need to do something or over something; it does not mean challenge a claim here. C take exception requires to, not with. D objection goes with raise an objection to, not take objection with.

Question 4 | B - draw

B - draw: "draw conclusions" means infer what the evidence shows. The researchers wait until sources have been compared. A make conclusions is not the standard collocation; C take and D put do not express making an inference with conclusions as their object. Contrast make a decision with draw a conclusion.

Question 5 | D - odds

D - odds: "at odds with newspaper reports" means in disagreement with them. A would require in conflict with, B in contrast with, and C a different construction such as show a difference from. The preposition at is decisive, and the differing accounts explain the meaning.

Question 6 | C - question

C - question: "called several familiar assumptions into question" means gave reasons to doubt them. A query can name a question but does not form this expression. B debate would require put up for debate; D argument does not fit call into argument. The text challenges assumptions without claiming every earlier account is false.

Question 7 | C - context

C - context: "read in their wider context" means interpret the documents alongside circumstances, purposes and other evidence. A extent measures how much or how far, but does not name an interpretive frame. B distance describes separation and cannot fit this meaning. D surroundings normally refers to the environment around a person or thing. The example after the colon concerns a writer's purpose and audience, which are part of a document's context.

Question 8 | D - resist

D - resist: "resist the temptation to treat a single ... quotation as the complete explanation" means avoid giving in to that attractive but misleading response. A refuse takes an offered thing or to + verb; B deny would mean say the temptation does not exist; C oppose describes taking a position against something, rather than controlling an urge. Resist temptation is the established collocation.