Open Cloze

Bringing a cinema back to life

Full exam-style task: eight open-cloze gaps. Original independent practice, not an official exam paper.

Read the whole passage, then write one word in each gap. Check your answers and read the explanations before continuing.

It was not (1) _____ a local history exhibition opened that residents began discussing the future of our abandoned cinema. Many had taken it (2) _____ granted that the building would eventually be demolished. A volunteer group, however, proposed turning it into a space for films and public talks.

Under no (3) _____ were volunteers allowed inside before a safety inspection. No sooner had permission been granted (4) _____ the group organised a clean-up. Residents (5) _____ applications to join had arrived first were given the earliest shifts, although everyone was eventually able to help.

The organisers were surprised by the extent (6) _____ which neighbours supported the project. Far (7) _____ being concerned only about old films, they wanted a place where different generations could meet. The volunteers had one thing in (8) _____: a belief that the cinema should serve the whole community. They agreed to test the idea with a small programme before planning a larger reopening.

Your answers

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

6 _____

7 _____

8 _____

Answers & explanations

Question 1 | until

"It was not until a local history exhibition opened that residents began discussing..." uses not until ... that to emphasise the starting point. The discussion followed the opening. When alone would leave not when ... that suggesting a contrast with another time, rather than expressing the delayed beginning. Learn the complete frame: It was not until X that Y.

Question 2 | for

"Many had taken it for granted that the building would eventually be demolished." Take something for granted means assume it is certain. Here it points forward to the that-clause. For belongs to the fixed expression; as would require a different construction, such as take it as a given.

Question 3 | circumstances / conditions

"Under no circumstances were volunteers allowed inside" means entry was absolutely forbidden. Conditions is also accepted: under no conditions expresses the same prohibition. The negative phrase at the front explains the inverted order were volunteers, not volunteers were. Circumstance in the singular does not fit the standard expression.

Question 4 | than

"No sooner had permission been granted than the group organised a clean-up." No sooner ... than connects events in immediate succession. The past perfect marks the earlier permission; the clean-up followed. When goes with hardly/scarcely ... when, not the no sooner ... than pattern.

Question 5 | whose

"Residents whose applications to join had arrived first were given the earliest shifts." Whose links residents to their applications and introduces a relative clause. Who would leave applications without a possessive link; who's means who is or who has and cannot work before applications here. The main verb for Residents is were given.

Question 6 | to

"The extent to which neighbours supported the project" means how strongly they supported it. To completes the fixed relative construction the extent to which. At which would describe a point or level in a different expression. Read beyond extent: which introduces the clause explaining what the extent refers to.

Question 7 | from

"Far from being concerned only about old films, they wanted a place where different generations could meet." Far from + -ing rejects or corrects an assumption. From links the phrase to being; away would need an additional from. The following clause explains how the ambitions were broader than preserving old films.

Question 8 | common

"The volunteers had one thing in common: a belief that the cinema should serve the whole community." In common means shared. The colon identifies the shared belief. General would form in general, meaning usually or broadly, which does not express possession of the same belief.