

**Reading and Use of English Paper Part 5 – Multiple choice:
Engagement traditions**

Overview: Students practise understanding vocabulary from context, then complete a Part 5 exam task.

Part of Exam: Reading and Use of English (Paper 1) Part 5

Language / Skill Practised: understanding meaning from context

Materials: One copy of the worksheet per student.

Time: 50 to 60 minutes, plus extension

Preparation: Make a copy of the worksheet for each student.

Procedure:**Part One: Warmer – Understanding meaning from context**

1. Ask students whether they have ever proposed, been proposed to, or have heard proposal stories from their friends/family. Ask them to share what happened, e.g. where the proposal took place, who proposed, what was said, and whether a gift was given.
2. Give out copies of the worksheet. Tell students they are going to learn some vocabulary that will come up in the reading task. Tell students to work in pairs and read through the sentences in exercise 1. You could encourage them to come up with their own definitions for the words in bold before they look at the options a–h. In pairs, they should match the words and the meanings.
3. Take whole-class feedback. Explain the meaning of any words students are still not sure of.
4. As an extension and to cement what they have learnt, ask students to write their own sentences containing the words in bold.

Key:

1 d 2 c 3 g 4 h 5 b 6 e 7 a 8 f

Part Two: Exam practice

1. Tell students to quickly skim the reading passage in exercise 2, and ask them what the general topic is (weddings / engagement traditions).
2. Tell students to work in pairs and look at the questions 1–6. Tell them to underline the key words. Go through any vocabulary in the questions/answers that students are unsure of.
3. Tell students to work on their own and answer the questions. When they have finished, they can check their answers in pairs and make any corrections as necessary.
4. Go through the answers as a whole class. Ask students to try to explain why each answer is correct.

Key:

1 C 2 D 3 B 4 D 5 A 6 B

Part Three: Extension

1. Tell students to look at exercise 3. They work in groups and brainstorm ideas for a new engagement tradition. Tell them that at this stage they should not discard any ideas, but just come up with as many ideas as possible. They should list all the ideas they come up with.
2. After they have finished brainstorming ideas, they should choose the two or three ideas that they think are best. They can then discuss these ideas to choose the best one.
3. Tell them they are going to give a short presentation about their chosen idea to the class. They can each speak in turn. They can organise what they want to say using bullet points/lists/tables/spidergrams/flowcharts. However, students should not read out loud when giving their presentations.
4. When groups have finished, other students can ask questions. Finally, have a class vote on which idea they like best.



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Tip: Try to think of your own definitions for the words in bold.

1 Work in pairs. Match the words in bold in the sentences 1–8 with their meanings a–h.

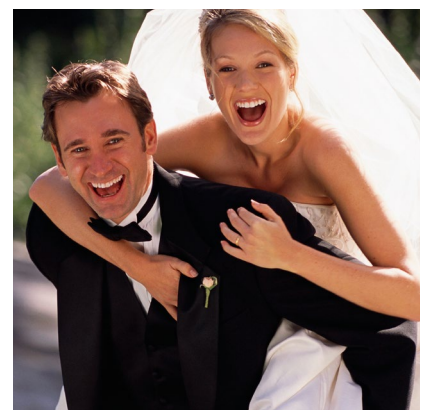
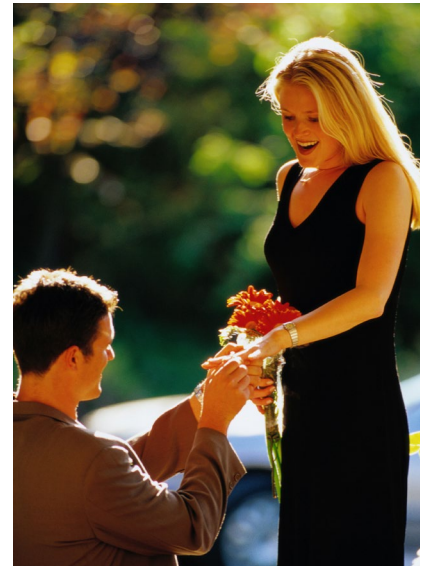
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| <p>1 The witness said the robber was very tall and had blond hair.</p> <p>2 I long to visit Australia. It's a dream of mine.</p> <p>3 Paris is synonymous with romance.</p> <p>4 Your shoes are really unique. I've never seen anything like them before.</p> <p>5 The bride and groom were showered with love and good wishes on their wedding day.</p> <p>6 It was a very unusual proposal. He hid a ring in her cup of tea and waited for her to find it.</p> <p>7 You can leave work early today, but please be discreet about it.</p> <p>8 I've got an exam this afternoon and I feel really nervous.</p> | <p>a careful about what you do so that other people don't see</p> <p>b given a lot of</p> <p>c want something very much</p> <p>d someone who is present when something happens</p> <p>e offer of marriage</p> <p>f worried</p> <p>g closely connected</p> <p>h not the same as anything or anyone else's</p> |
|--|--|

2 You are going to read an article about engagement traditions. For questions 1–6, choose the answer (A, B, C or D) you think fits best according to the text.

'Will you marry me?' These are the words many a nervous young man has said and many a young woman has longed to hear. In the West, the man would traditionally 'go down on one knee' to make his proposal. The woman simply has to respond 'Yes' or 'No', and the couple are then engaged, or fiancés. The term 'engagement' refers to a special promise you make to someone you want to marry. This romantic occasion is so special that it has always been associated with unique customs and rites. Some of the traditions related to engagement make you wish romantic love was more in fashion these days. They also prove that offering your love has always been associated with giving gifts.

There are numerous examples of how the proposal was celebrated in the past in the public eye, although the signals exchanged between the lovers were quite discreet. For instance, if a gentleman sent you a pair of gloves, this was considered a proposal of marriage. You could signal your acceptance without saying a word. It was enough to wear them at church the following Sunday.

As part of 'spooning', a similar Welsh custom, the groom-to-be would give his beloved a carved wooden spoon as a wedding proposal gift. These 'love spoons' would contain intricate, symbolic designs, such as hearts for love, balls to represent children and horseshoes for luck. It demonstrated his commitment to his fiancé, and also proved that he was a skilled craftsman, able to provide an income for his new wife.



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Another token of love, still popular nowadays, is a diamond engagement ring. The tradition is known to have originated in 14th-century Italy. The piece of jewellery was treated as proof of payment made by the man to his future wife's parents. It was also his promise of commitment to the woman he loved. One famous ring, known as the Gimmel Ring, consisted of three parts, each of which was worn until the wedding by a different person: the bride, groom and a witness. On the wedding day, the three pieces were put together again to serve as the bridal wedding ring. In the 1940s, diamond company De Beers came up with the advertising slogan 'A diamond is forever', instantly making diamonds synonymous with romance and life-long commitments. Sales of diamond engagement rings went through the roof.

Back in the old days, when marriages were arranged by parents, it was vital that the bride should have a dowry. In other words, young women used to receive money from their parents. Brides were supposed to give the money to their husbands on the wedding day. Not all women were lucky enough to receive a dowry, though. In Holland, for example, if the bride's father didn't approve of his future son-in-law, his daughter would receive no dowry. Therefore, the bride's friends would 'shower' the woman with gifts so she could afford to marry the man she loved, despite her parents' refusal to offer financial support. This is where the tradition of 'bridal shower' parties comes from.

In the West, the average age of brides and grooms is getting older – in the UK, it now stands at 30 and 32 respectively. Long ago, families sought to cement alliances by arranging engagements between their sons and daughters when they were still children. Thus, engagements could last many years until the children were old enough to wed. In some cultures, this is still the case today. More often though, modern engagements last around 12 months – just enough time to get everything organised for the wedding.

[587 words]

- 1 In the first paragraph, what is the writer's attitude?
 - A She believes most young women feel nervous when they receive a proposal.
 - B She believes it is impolite to propose standing up.
 - C She wishes people would be more romantic these days.
 - D She believes it is important to give expensive engagement gifts.
- 2 In paragraphs 2 and 3, what do we learn about marriage proposals of the past?
 - A They were often celebrated in public.
 - B They were usually religious.
 - C Engagement gifts were less popular than today.
 - D They were sometimes unspoken.
- 3 What was the purpose of a Welsh love spoon?
 - A It was a decoration for the wedding.
 - B It was a sign that the groom would be able to look after his wife.
 - C It proved the groom understood symbols.
 - D It told the bride how many children she would have.
- 4 What do we learn about the tradition of diamond engagement rings?
 - A It is not known where the tradition began.
 - B Engagement rings have only ever been worn by the bride-to-be.
 - C Businesses have had little effect on the popularity of diamond rings.
 - D It is a long tradition that has become more popular recently.
- 5 In paragraph 5, what does 'approve of' mean?
 - A think that someone or something is good
 - B accept someone's status
 - C know the parents of someone
 - D understand the language of someone
- 6 What is the purpose of engagements that begin in childhood?
 - A It gives the families enough time to save up for a dowry.
 - B It forms close bonds of cooperation between families.
 - C It gives families time to organise everything for the wedding.
 - D It gives children time to get to know their husband / wife-to-be.



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3 Work in groups of three. Invent a new engagement tradition which reflects the reality of the 21st century. Make it as romantic and as up-to-date as possible. Brainstorm ideas before you agree on the final version. Present your ideas to the rest of the class, then vote on the most creative one.

A: I think a great new engagement tradition would be to plant a tree.

B: Why?

A: You could plant it together when you get engaged, and watch it grow bigger and stronger. Just like your marriage. Just imagine how big it would be on your 20th wedding anniversary!