Text completion: dependent meanings across two and three blanks

Original classroom teaching; not an official form or score predictor

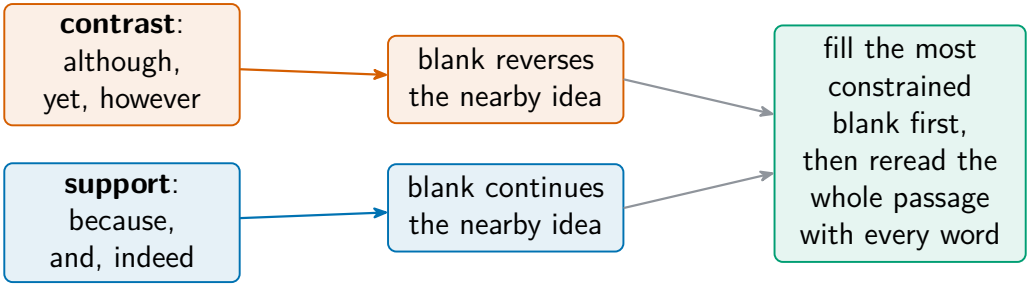
Text Completion: Dependent Meanings Across Two and Three Blanks

- Complete passages with two or three blanks, one choice from each column of three.
- Use cue words and the logic of the whole passage to fix each blank.
- Tell a tentative **conjecture** 推测 from an established claim, and a **dogmatic** 武断的 view from a careful one.
- Check that all the chosen words fit together.

Read the whole passage first

- Read to the end before choosing anything: the clearest clue may come after the blank.
- Mark contrast cues (although, yet, however, despite), support cues (because, so, indeed, and) and limits (only, rather than, not every).
- Predict a plain meaning for each blank in your own words.

Figure: Read the whole passage first



- Cue words set the direction of each blank.
- Match each part of the diagram to the text.

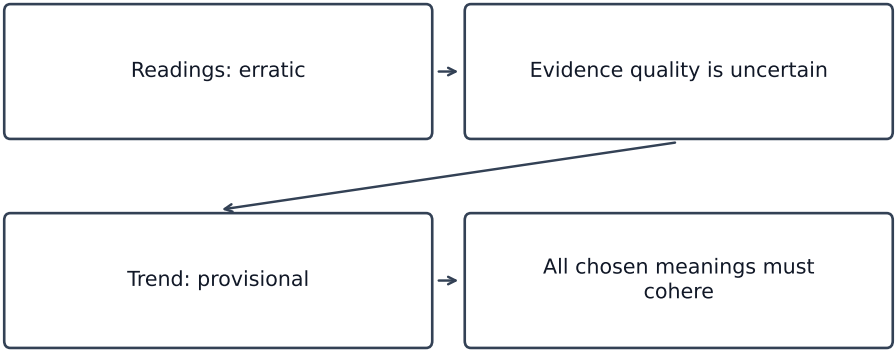
Start where the clue is strongest

- Fill the most constrained blank first: the one with the clearest cue.
- Use its meaning to narrow the next blank, then reread the first to check it still fits.
- Every blank must be right; there is no credit for two out of three.

Test the finished passage

- Read the passage with all your choices in place.
- Check direction (positive or negative), degree (mild or extreme) and logic (cause, contrast, limit).
- Reject a word that pairs nicely with another blank but contradicts an explicit limit in the passage.

Figure: Test the finished passage



- Choose every blank so that the chosen meanings fit together

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Worked example: two dependent blanks

- "Although" sets up a contrast between the start and what the results did.
- Consistent results are good news, so the start must be negative: (i) dubious.
- Good results make doubters change their minds: (ii) reconsider.
- Check: "Although the proposal was initially dubious, the pilot's consistent results made its critics reconsider." Direction and logic agree.

Worked example: an original application

- Original two-blank task: “The instrument’s early readings were (i) _____, so the team treated the apparent trend as (ii) _____ rather than established.” Choose one per column.
- Blank i: erratic / consistent / definitive.
- Blank ii: provisional / inevitable / irrelevant.
- **erratic; provisional.** Unstable readings justify a tentative interpretation.

Independent transfer

- Original three-blank task: “Although the archive is (i) _____, its missing years do not make every conclusion (ii) _____: patterns repeated in the surviving independent records still justify a (iii) _____ claim.” Blank i: incomplete / comprehensive / fabricated.
- Blank ii: untenable / decisive / modest.
- Blank iii: qualified / universal / unrelated.
- Choose one per column and explain every rejection.

Common errors

- Choosing the first blank before reading the whole passage.
- Treating each column as a separate question.
- Missing a negation such as "do not" or "rather than".

Common errors (2)

- Choosing a word of the right direction but the wrong strength.
- Not rereading the completed passage.

Key terms

- **conjecture**: A conclusion formed from incomplete evidence.
- **dogmatic**: Holding an opinion firmly without considering evidence against it.

Check yourself

- Which blank should you fill first?
- "The data were (i) _____, so the conclusion remained (ii) _____." If (i) is "sparse", what is (ii)?
- Do you get partial credit for two correct blanks out of three?