

PTE Academic Lesson Plan Ideas: Test Taking Strategies

Lesson 12 – Reorder paragraphs

Time allocated: 60 minutes

Step 1: Introduce the Question Type

This question type assesses reading skills. It requires test takers to be familiar with the organization and cohesion of academic texts and arrange text boxes in a single correct order.

The text boxes in the left panel have been placed in a random order. Restore the original order by dragging the text boxes from the left panel to the right panel.

Source	Target
But in Scotland three banks are still allowed to issue banknotes.	
When this bank was founded in 1695, Scots coinage was in short supply and of uncertain value, compared with English, Dutch, Flemish or French coin.	
To face growth of trade it was deemed necessary to remedy this lack of an adequate currency.	
The first Scottish bank to do this was the Bank of Scotland.	
In most countries it is only the government, through their central banks, who are permitted to issue currency.	

Step 2: Present the Question Type Strategies

Strategy 1

Quickly and quietly read the content of the text boxes to yourself. While you are reading, listen for one text box that sounds complete by itself and makes most sense alone. This sentence is likely to be the most logical introduction to the paragraph or topic.

Strategy 2

Once you have identified the introduction or topic sentence, quietly read the remaining boxes to yourself again to listen for flow. While you are reading, look for language patterns that will help you identify a sequence. Check the language patterns in each box to confirm your sequence (i.e., use of connectives, use of indefinite articles for first reference, definite articles for further reference, use of pronouns, etc.).

Strategy 3

Quietly read the boxes to yourself in the order that you have sequenced them. This will help you check whether the sentences flow smoothly from one to another, and whether the passage makes sense and sounds logical and correct as a whole.

Step 3: Explain and Practice Each Strategy

Strategy 1

Explain to your students that for this question type it is important to be able to quickly recognize the topic of the passage, the topic or opening sentence and the overall sequence. One way to help them quickly identify a flow within the passage is to read the text quietly to themselves. “Hearing” the text may help them recognize patterns and flow that they might oversee when skimming or scanning.

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities:

- Ask students to listen carefully. Explain that you will read out loud the jumbled sentences of a paragraph and that they should listen for the sentence that sounds most like an opening or topic sentence.
- Read the sentences from Question 1 out loud, one-by-one. After each sentence, ask students to tell you whether they think the sentence is a topic sentence or not and to explain their reasons.
- Once they have agreed, display the topic sentence. (*In most countries it is only the government, through their central banks, who are permitted to issue currency.* This is the first text box because it provides background information that makes the rest of the information in the passage stand out as significant.)

Strategy 2

Remind your students that once the topic sentence or introduction to the passage has been identified, they must then sequence the remaining boxes. Explain that they should now read out loud the remaining boxes again to listen for flow and look for language patterns that will help them identify a sequence. Remind them that flow and sequence within English texts is created with connectives, the use of indefinite articles for first reference and definite articles for further reference, the use of pronouns to replace nouns that have been identified earlier and so on.

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities in pairs:

- Give students copies of Question 1.
- Ask them to first read the sentences out loud to each other and identify the sentence that follows most logically from the topic sentence. (*But in Scotland three banks are still allowed to issue banknotes.*)
- Discuss their choices with the class and ask them to explain their reasons for choosing this sentence. (This is the second text box because it introduces the subject of the passage. However, it is not the first sentence because “But” and “still allowed” signal that this sentence is referring to a restriction described in a previous sentence.)
- Ask students to continue to re-order the remaining sentences in pairs.

Strategy 3

Explain to your students that the final step is to re-read the whole passage quietly, in the sequence that they have reordered the sentences, to check for logic and overall sense as well as flow. At this point, your students should be able to hear whether the text sounds good or whether further adjustments need to be made.

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities:

- Put pairs into groups of four. Have pairs swap work and read the sentences out loud in the order specified. Have students listen carefully to each other to check whether their responses sound correct when read out loud by another pair. Ask them to discuss any sentences that they do not agree on.
- Feed back their responses to the class by getting pairs to read out loud their responses. Ask students to discuss the reasons for their choices.
- After they have done this, show the answers and explanations for Question 1, and compare their explanations with those given. Discuss any queries.

Step 4: Respond to a Re-order Paragraphs Question

Explain to your students that they will now respond to a test question simulating the test conditions. Remind them of the three strategies covered in this lesson and ask them to apply these strategies.

Give out copies of Question 2.

Step 5: Provide Feedback

Ask your students if they were able to use the strategies. Which one was the most difficult to apply? Which one do they think was the most useful?

Ask students to discuss their choices and evaluate each other's responses in pairs or groups. Then provide the answers and explanations for Question 2.

Question 1

The text boxes in the left panel have been placed in a random order. Restore the original order by drawing a line from the text box on the left to the space provided on the right.

Source
But in Scotland three banks are still allowed to issue banknotes.
When this bank was founded in 1695, Scots coinage was in short supply and of uncertain value, compared with English, Dutch, Flemish or French coin.
To face growth of trade it was deemed necessary to remedy this lack of an adequate currency.
The first Scottish bank to do this was the Bank of Scotland.
In most countries it is only the government, through their central banks, who are permitted to issue currency.

Target

Question 1: Answer Key and Explanations

Correct Answer:

1. In most countries it is only the government, through their central banks, who are permitted to issue currency.
2. But in Scotland three banks are still allowed to issue banknotes.
3. The first Scottish bank to do this was the Bank of Scotland.
4. When this bank was founded in 1695, Scots coinage was in short supply and of uncertain value, compared with English, Dutch, Flemish or French coin.
5. To face growth of trade it was deemed necessary to remedy this lack of an adequate currency.

Explanations:

1. In most countries it is only the government, through their central banks, who are permitted to issue currency.
This is the first text box because it provides background information that makes the rest of the information in the passage stand out as significant.
2. But in Scotland three banks are still allowed to issue banknotes.
This is the second text box because it introduces the subject of the passage. However, it is not the first sentence because “But” and “still allowed” signal that this sentence is referring to a restriction described in a previous sentence.
3. The first Scottish bank to do this was the Bank of Scotland.
This is the third text box because it gives an example of one of the three banks in Scotland mentioned in the previous sentence. Also the phrase “to do this” refers to the phrase, “to issue banknotes” in the previous sentence.
4. When this bank was founded in 1695, Scots coinage was in short supply and of uncertain value, compared with English, Dutch, Flemish or French coin.
This is the fourth text box because “this bank” refers to “the Bank of Scotland” mentioned in the third sentence.
5. To face growth of trade it was deemed necessary to remedy this lack of an adequate currency.
This is the fifth text box because it concludes the paragraph by giving a reason why the Bank of Scotland issued its own currency.

Question 2

The text boxes in the left panel have been placed in a random order. Restore the original order by drawing a line from the text box on the left to the space provided on the right.

Source
These markets had become rapidly dominated by powerful enterprises who were able to act in their own interests, against the interests of both workers and consumers.
Mill was able to see an expanded role for the State in such legislation to protect us against powerful interests.
He was able to argue that the State was the only organ that was genuinely capable of responding to social needs and social interests, unlike markets.
There had already been some legislation to prevent such abuses - such as various Factory Acts to prevent the exploitation of child workers.
Markets may be good at encouraging innovation and following trends, but they were no good at ensuring social equality.

Target

Question 2: Answer Key and Explanations

Correct Answer:

- Markets may be good at encouraging innovation and following trends, but they were no good at ensuring social equality.
- These markets had become rapidly dominated by powerful enterprises who were able to act in their own interests, against the interests of both workers and consumers.
- There had already been some legislation to prevent such abuses - such as various Factory Acts to prevent the exploitation of child workers.
- Mill was able to see an expanded role for the State in such legislation to protect us against powerful interests.
- He was able to argue that the State was the only organ that was genuinely capable of responding to social needs and social interests, unlike markets.

Explanations:

- Markets may be good at encouraging innovation and following trends, but they were no good at ensuring social equality.
This is the first text box because it introduces the topic of the paragraph. All of the other text boxes contain clues that they refer to some previous sentence.
- These markets had become rapidly dominated by powerful enterprises who were able to act in their own interests, against the interests of both workers and consumers.
This is the second text box because the sentence in it begins with "These markets" which is a sign that a sentence about markets came immediately before it.

3. There had already been some legislation to prevent such abuses - such as various Factory Acts to prevent the exploitation of child workers.
This is the third text box because it discusses government response to the situation described in the previous text box. The phrase "such abuses" refers to the previous sentence's mention of enterprises acting against the interests of workers.
4. Mill was able to see an expanded role for the State in such legislation to protect us against powerful interests.
This is the fourth text box because it contains the phrase "such legislation" which refers to the "Factory Acts" in the preceding sentence.
5. He was able to argue that the State was the only organ that was genuinely capable of responding to social needs and social interests, unlike markets.
This is the fifth text box because it concludes the paragraph by providing a solution to the problem raised in the first sentence. Additionally, "He" could only refer to "Mill", which is in the previous text box, since "Mill" is the only proper name of a person used in the paragraph.