After reading the entire text quickly for gist and an understanding of how the writer's ideas are laid out.

Hope and Sadness

There's often a sense of the hopeless romantic associated with those who trek to the Highlands in search (more in hope than expectation) of the white stuff. More often than not, these ski and snowboard fanatics are met with disappointment. Either a thaw has set in and the rocks are visible or it's a total whiteout as gales blow and blizzards blast the poor expectant hopefuls. The Highlands, you see, is a tale of extremes; it's all or nothing up there. **37** But those patient folk – those old romantics whose sense of loyalty and optimism seems to know no bounds – are having the last laugh this winter. Picture this: fresh powder everywhere; 180cm of accumulated snow at the base of the resort; more falls forecast for later in the week; clear blue skies and a blazing sun. No, this isn't some upmarket French alpine retreat full of five-star chalets and bulging wallets. This is humble little Cairngorm, pride of Scotland. This is real, old-style skiing without the gloss. There's an infectious passion and enthusiasm here today. **38**

Despite all the talk of global warming spelling the end for Scotland's long-suffering winter sport industry, Cairngorm and its four sister resorts; the Lecht, Glenshee, Glencoe and the Nevis Range aren't about to go down without a fight. And, finally, nature has lent them a helping hand. As I am about to hop onto the chairlift, I can't resist the urge to pause and admire the scene around me; the Highlands at its best. **39** Back then, these slopes were crowded with thousands of skiers all season long; full to capacity – just as they are once again today. The cafes are overflowing with people enjoying their apres ski. You can see skiers of all sorts; beginners, wannabes and

Focus on the first gap. Read the information before and after it very carefully.

Even if the gap is at the start or end of a paragraph, read the 'before' and 'after' sentences. Paragraphs flow into one another and it is important to check that your chosen sentence fits well with what is said in the other paragraph.

A. The more we begin to feel the effects of global warming, the more it seems to be nothing instead of all.

B. Why have we wrecked this planet for future generations?

C. It's like going back in time to the glory days of the 1960s and 70s.

D. These people have waited a long time!

E. All of my happiest memories of winters growing up as a child were spent flying down the slopes.

F. Do you remember those hopeless romantics I described before?

G. But sadly there isn't the snow base to satisfy their passion or desire.

Sentences like these make the task slightly easier; they can only fit in the text where 'these people' have been mentioned immediately before. Look out for clues like this, then ask yourself who 'these people' might be.

When skimming through the sentences, look for repetition of words, phrases or ideas. But, BE CAREFUL, just because a word or phrase is repeated do not assume it is the right choice. Here, it is not just the words but the context and meaning that confirm the sentence as the right choice.

As you skim the sentences underline key words and phrases.

Therefore, as well as repetition of words/phrases/ideas, look out for sentences which introduce an idea when an introduction is missing; explain an idea when only the introduction is there; justify an argument or point made; exemplify (give an example of) an argument or point made; conclude an argument or point; link points together etc.

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