

READING

Read the following text carefully and complete each blank with the best option from the box. Each word can be used only ONCE. There are **five extra words** that you will not need. *Item 0* is an example.

AWARE	EVEN	FLOPS	SPOTLESS
BANDWIDTH	EVER	HUB	STUNNINGLY
CHALLENGES	EYE	KEY	LANDFILL
ENVIRONMENT	FILTHY	LIKELY	TOUGH

BUILDING ANTARCTIC WHARF IS ICE WORK — IF YOU CAN GET IT

Builders required. (0) key skills: self-starter, comfortable working in the cold, happy to be away from home for six months at a time. Desirable: experience of coaxing elephant seals off construction sites.

The world's most remote engineering project has begun. At Rothera research station in British Antarctica, a new wharf is being built in preparation for the arrival of RRS *Sir David Attenborough* in one of the most ambitious construction programmes (1) _____ undertaken this far south.

When finished, the wharf will be five storeys high and 74 metres long. David Seaton, project manager for the British Antarctic Survey, said that even without the difficulties of the location it would be (2) _____. "This is not a small-scale project," he said. "It would be notable in the UK, and complex to deliver. But in Antarctica, thousands of miles away and in snow and ice — it is very challenging."

The current wharf at Rothera, on the Antarctic peninsula, was built in 1991. The base acts as a (3) _____ for scientists in the continent and it is where many of the people and supplies arrive. But with the commissioning of a new research vessel, a far longer dock is needed.

Following the arrival of 24-hour sunlight, the sea ice has finally cleared enough for the works, expected to last two Antarctic summers, to begin. Mr Seaton said the difficulties started even before the materials were delivered. "One of the biggest issues we have is we can't bring in alien species," he said. All the steel and construction equipment had to be kept free of contamination. "We had to make sure everything is (4) _____." But if the alien species are a problem, so too are native ones. On Antarctica, the world's last great wilderness, humans are very much second-class animals. If a pod of killer whales is spotted in the bay, then diving operations have to stop until they leave. If an elephant seal (5) _____ in front of a digger, its two-tonne bulk has to be gently persuaded to move before works can resume. "They're a bit of a pain," Mr Seaton said. "They do tend to get in the way of the works."

All of which means that the humans employed to take on the job have had to be chosen carefully. "One of our biggest (6) _____ is to select the right people, so they know what they are coming to," Mr Seaton said. In mid-summer temperatures hover around zero, but by the end of the season in May it can be a lot colder. "You have to be careful about cold injuries. People must have sufficient rest breaks and you have to keep a good (7) _____ on them."

The company that won the contract, BAM, was chosen in part because it has experience working in Scottish harbours. Those who have just arrived at Rothera are (8) _____ that the difficulties are more than the weather, or even belligerent marine mammals.

"They don't get to go home for the weekend," Mr Seaton said. "We haven't got social media here. There's not great internet. There are 150 people and the total (9) _____ is a fraction of what a normal family home would have."

For those prepared to brave not being able to update their Instagram feed, however, there are considerable compensations. "I'm convinced it'll be a true highlight for every single person who works here," Mr Seaton told *The Times* from Rothera.

"I couldn't imagine a better view anywhere in the world. There are mountains, sea, icebergs. It's fantastic. I had a walk just now and saw three Adélie penguins and lots of elephant seals.

"It's a (10) _____ beautiful place."

Adapted from an article by Tom Whipple © *The Times*, 16 January 2019