Use of English C2 – Worksheet 1

Name: Class: Date: Score: / 32

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Exercise 1: Open cloze

Read the connected sentences about urban meadows and write ONE word in each gap.

Example: She is one of the most talented musicians I have ___ met. → ever

1. Few urban planners would have predicted, _____ little as twenty years ago, that wild meadows might one day replace neat lawns in city parks.
2. Yet that is precisely _____ has happened in dozens of cities across the continent.
3. _____ though the idea initially met with fierce resistance, residents have gradually warmed to it.
4. Far _____ being untidy, the meadows are now regarded as havens for insects and birds.
5. Not _____ do they support biodiversity, but they also require far less maintenance than traditional lawns.
6. Had it _____ been for a handful of determined volunteers, the first projects would never have got off the ground.
7. _____ the success of these schemes, some councils remain reluctant to abandon their mowing schedules.
8. It remains to be seen _____ the trend will last, but for now the bees, at least, seem delighted.

Exercise 2: Word formation

Use the word in capitals to form a word that fits the gap.

Example: The ___ of the bridge took three years. (CONSTRUCT) → construction

9. The council's decision to close the library was met with widespread _____ and angry protests from local residents. (APPROVE)
10. Her stubborn _____ to compromise eventually cost her the leadership. (WILLING)
11. The novel's ending is deliberately _____, leaving readers to draw their own conclusions. (AMBIGUITY)
12. Despite his outward _____, he was in fact deeply anxious about the outcome. (COMPOSE)
13. The scheme proved _____ expensive and was abandoned within a year. (PROHIBIT)

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14. The minister's remarks were widely seen as an attempt to _____ the seriousness of the crisis. (PLAY)
15. The documentary offers a rare and _____ insight into life in remote fishing communities. (ILLUMINATE)
16. The two accounts of the incident were completely _____ with each other. (RECONCILE)

Exercise 3: Key word transformation

Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first, using the word in capitals. Do not change the key word. Use between two and five words, including the key word.

Example: I haven't seen her for years. (SINCE) → It's years ___ her. → since I last saw

17. I didn't realise how serious the situation was until I read the report. (ONLY) → _____ the report did I realise how serious the situation was.

18. People say that the company is planning major job cuts. (SAID) → The company _____ planning major job cuts.

19. It was wrong of you to leave without telling anyone. (SHOULD) → You _____ without telling anyone.

20. I'd prefer you not to mention this to anyone. (RATHER) → I'd _____ this to anyone.

21. There's no point in arguing with him; he never changes his mind. (WORTH) → It _____ with him; he never changes his mind.

22. As soon as he arrived, the meeting started. (SOONER) → No _____ than the meeting started.

23. Although he tried hard, he couldn't solve the puzzle. (HOWEVER) → _____ tried, he couldn't solve the puzzle.

24. I'm sure it wasn't Tom who broke the window. (CAN'T) → Tom _____ the window.

Exercise 4: Collocations and fixed phrases

Write ONE word in each gap to complete the collocation or fixed phrase.

Example: The decision was made on the ___ of the moment. → spur

25. The new regulations will come into _____ at the start of next year.
26. In her speech, she paid _____ to the volunteers who had made the event possible.

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27. The proposal was rejected out of _____ without any proper discussion.

28. His explanation simply doesn't hold _____ under close scrutiny.

29. Given how strong the home side were, the team's victory was a foregone _____.

30. Their research has thrown new _____ on the origins of the disease.

31. Several ministers are said to be at _____ over the budget.

32. The negotiations were conducted behind closed _____, so few details have emerged.

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Answer key – Use of English C2 – Worksheet 1

Exercise 1: Open cloze

1. **as**
   'As little as' emphasises that a period of time is surprisingly short.
2. **what**
   'What' acts as a relative pronoun meaning 'the thing that'.
3. **Even**
   'Even though' introduces a contrast with a known fact.
4. **from**
   'Far from' means 'not at all' and is followed by a noun or -ing form.
5. **only**
   'Not only' at the start of a clause triggers inversion and pairs with 'but also'.
6. **not**
   'Had it not been for' is an inverted third conditional meaning 'if it hadn't been for'.
7. **Despite**
   A preposition of contrast followed by a noun phrase is needed here.
8. **whether**
   'Whether' introduces an indirect yes/no question after 'it remains to be seen'.

Exercise 2: Word formation

9. **disapproval**
   A negative noun is needed to match the 'angry protests'.
10. **unwillingness**
    A negative noun is needed, since refusing to compromise cost her the job.
11. **ambiguous**
    An adjective is needed after 'is deliberately'.
12. **composure**
    'Composure' is the noun meaning a calm, controlled state.
13. **prohibitively**
    An adverb modifying 'expensive' is needed; 'prohibitively expensive' is a common collocation.
14. **downplay**
    'Downplay' means to make something seem less important than it is.
15. **illuminating**
    An -ing adjective meaning 'helping to explain' is needed before 'insight'.
16. **irreconcilable**
    A negative adjective meaning 'impossible to make agree' fits the context.

Exercise 3: Key word transformation

17. **Only when I read**
    When a sentence begins with 'Only when/after/once...' or 'Only on/upon + -ing', the main clause uses inverted word order ('did I realise'), so 'Only when I read', 'Only after reading', 'Only on reading' and similar time expressions are all correct.
18. **is said to be**
    The impersonal passive 'People say that...' becomes 'subject + is said to + infinitive', and because the action is in progress we use the continuous infinitive 'to be planning', giving 'is said to be'.
19. **should not have left**
    'Should not have + past participle' criticises a past action that was a mistake, so 'should not have left' or the contracted 'shouldn't have left' expresses 'It was wrong of you to leave'.
20. **rather you did not mention**
    'Would rather' followed by a different subject takes the past simple to refer to the present or future, so 'rather you did not mention' or 'rather you didn't mention' is correct.
21. **is not worth arguing**
    'There's no point in doing' is equivalent to 'it is not worth + -ing', so 'is not worth arguing', 'isn't worth arguing' and ''s not worth arguing' are all correct.
22. **sooner had he arrived**
    'No sooner' at the start of a sentence requires inversion with the past perfect and is followed by 'than', so 'sooner had he arrived' expresses that the meeting began immediately after his arrival.
23. **However hard he**
    'However + adverb + subject + verb' expresses concession like 'although', so both 'However hard he' and 'However much he' correctly convey that his efforts were in vain.
24. **can't have broken**
    'Can't have + past participle' expresses certainty that something did not happen in the past, so 'can't have broken' matches 'I'm sure it wasn't Tom'.

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Exercise 4: Collocations and fixed phrases

25. **effect**
    Both 'come into effect' and 'come into force' are fixed collocations meaning that a law or regulation starts to apply officially.
26. **tribute**
    'Pay tribute to' means to publicly praise or thank someone.
27. **hand**
    'Out of hand' means immediately and without consideration.
28. **water**
    'Hold water' means to be logical or convincing.
29. **conclusion**
    'A foregone conclusion' is a result that is certain in advance.
30. **light**
    'Throw light on' means to help explain something.
31. **odds**
    'At odds' and 'at loggerheads' both mean in disagreement.
32. **doors**
    'Behind closed doors' means in private, away from the public.

Notes for teachers: Set the exercises under timed conditions (about 10 minutes each) to simulate exam pressure, then have students compare answers in pairs before checking. Typical errors include missing negative prefixes in word formation, going over the five-word limit in transformations, and forgetting the auxiliary after negative adverbials such as 'Only when' or 'No sooner'. As a follow-up, ask students to write their own short open-cloze text or transformation items for a partner to solve.

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