Reading Skill 4: INSERT SENTENCES INTO THE PASSAGE

TheTOEFL iBT® test asks you to insert a sentence into the passage to assess your skill at understanding the logical organization of a passage as well as the logical and grammatical connections between sentences in a passage. On the test, you are given a choice of four locations indicated by black squares where you can insert the bolded sentence from the question. The locations are at the beginning or the end of sentences. Usually the sentences are in the same paragraph, but occasionally they may be in two consecutive paragraphs, typically at the end of one paragraph and the beginning of the next one. To insert the sentence, click on a square. The sentence will be placed at the location of that square and highlighted.

Strategies to Answer Sentence Insertion Questions

- Read the sentence to determine if it is stating a general idea or is talking about a specific example or detail. General ideas usually occur toward the beginning of the paragraph; an example or detail will typically be one of the sentences after the main idea sentence of a paragraph.
- Look for referents, pronouns, or adjectives within the sentence that can be connected to an idea(s) in one of the sentences marked with a black square (refer to the Reference Words chart on page 22 in Reading Skill 2 for more information on these words).
- Look for connections between singular and plural nouns or pronouns in the bolded sentence in the question to be inserted and the marked sentences in the passage.
- Look for transitional words or phrases (see chart below) that establish a relationship between ideas in the sentence in the question and the marked sentences in the passage.
- Once you click on the black square where you think the bolded sentence should be placed and it is inserted into the paragraph, read the sentence before the inserted sentence, and the sentence after to double check that you have placed it in the best location.

Transitional Words and Phrases	
Contrast	*however; although; contrary to; on the contrary; in contrast to; on the other hand*
Similarity	*similarly; likewise; in the same way; like; as*
Addition of Ideas	*and; also; as well; in addition; further; furthermore; moreover*
Examples	*for example; for instance*
Sequence	*first; next; afterward; subsequently; then; finally*
Result	*therefore; as a result; consequently; thus; hence*

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Example

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Games

1▶ Games and competitive activities have been an integral part of many societies for thousands of years. Though the exact date of when games started is impossible to trace, it is assumed that they were initiated as a means of entertainment and relaxation. They may also have developed as a method of distinguishing which members of a group had superior skills, whether physical or mental, which could contribute to the survival and prosperity of the entire group.

2▶ **1A** Games fall under two broad categories: those that primarily require physical skills, such as wrestling or soccer, or those that focus more on mental skills, like board games or cards. **1B** Certainly physical competitions involve the use of intelligent strategy to plan out the best moves to make, such as calculating how to get a ball past the opponents' team to the goal. **1C** In a similar way, games that emphasize mental abilities may also require some sort of physical skill, especially in terms of making quick moves. **1D** Therefore, it is fair to say that, though there are distinct categories of games, there are shared similarities among most games.

3▶ In general, for a game to exist, an individual or group must be competing against something, typically another individual or group. Each competition involves guidelines that all players must adhere to in order to advance in the game. **2A** Virtually all games have some sort of ranking system, many of these involving the awarding of points for attaining a certain level or goal. **2B** Competitors who use successful strategies while following the rules of the game get more points or a higher ranking. **2C** Likewise, unsuccessful tactics cause players to fall behind their competitors. **2D** Finally, almost every game involves some sort of risk. The risk involved in ancient games may be relatively small by today's standards, as in a gain or loss of status or reputation within a group, or it may have been larger, involving a gain or loss of power, money, or possessions. This risk, which most likely originated as a method to promote survival, is what today still motivates players to do their best in the competition.

4▶ **3A** Card games are a prime example of how societies evolve over time. **3B** Many experts trace the origin of cards back to ancient China, around the time the Chinese began using sheets of paper for writing instead of rolls of paper. **3C** The smaller sheets of paper made it convenient to develop portable card games in which the pieces could be easily replicated and carried from place to place. **3D** This portability permitted the transfer of card games across multiple cultures as traders and travelers from various countries would meet and pass the time together sharing games on the road.

5▶ Card games also reveal cultural values. One common similarity among card games is that there are suits, or sets of cards, within each deck. Each suit has a certain amount of cards with the same symbol, though the number of symbols on each card might vary. For example, the traditional American deck of cards has four suits of 13 cards each: hearts, spades, clubs, and diamonds. **4A** In some cultures the suits are represented with money symbols, and in others, with deities or objects considered valuable or spiritually significant. **4B** Some experts argue that examining cards from a certain era of a particular society can be a window into what the society viewed as necessary or worthy.

6▶ **4C** When cards were first created, they had to be made by hand, a time consuming process. It was also expensive, which meant that, initially, card games were a privilege of the rich. **4D** The invention of the printing press resulted in an easier and much cheaper reproduction of cards, which made them more accessible and more popular among the working classes of society as well. The accessibility of cards not only accounted for the widespread circulation of card games, but also brought along with it the symbols of importance within a culture. For instance, as Europeans brought cards to the Americas, the cards retained the powerful images of kings, queens, and princes on cards of higher value. These symbols remain a reminder of the original power structures that were common in many countries in the Western Hemisphere.

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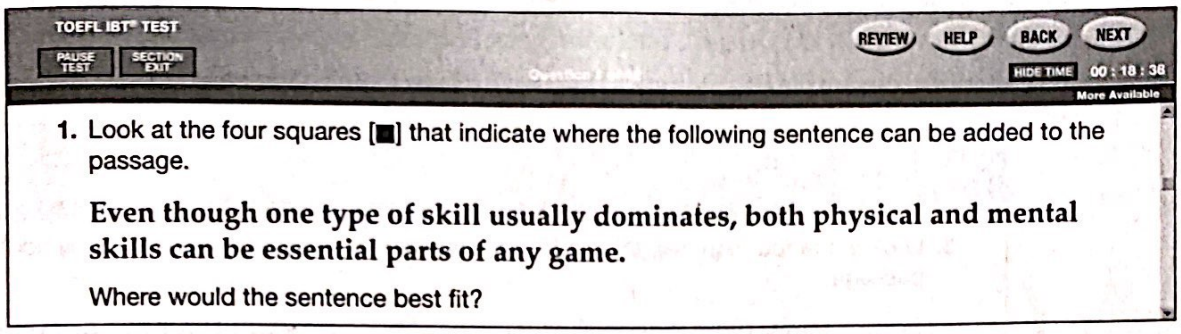
Look at an example of a sentence that can be inserted into the passage. (See paragraph 2.)



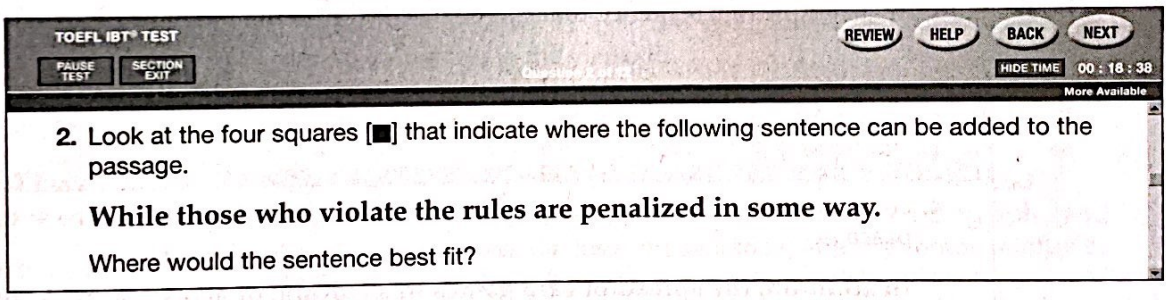
To answer this question, you need to decide the best place in paragraph 2 *to add* the sentence.

When you read the sentence, you will notice that the first part of the sentence says, *Even though one type of skill* (physical or mental) *usually dominates. . . .* Therefore, a connection to the previous sentence can be made in which physical and mental skills are mentioned separately.

The last part of the sentence mentions that *both physical and mental skills are essential parts of any game*. Therefore, a connection can be made to the sentences following this one, which explain how a physical game uses mental skills and a mental game uses physical skills.

Using this information, and looking at the context of the paragraph, you can see that the best choice to place this sentence is (1B). You should click on (1B) to insert the sentence in the correct location.

Look at another example of a sentence that can be inserted into the passage. (See paragraph 3.)



To answer this question, you need to decide the best place in paragraph 3 *to add* the sentence.

The first words of this sentence are *While those* [people] *who*, which indicate a contrast to the people who were mentioned in a previous sentence by using the word "While." It also indicates that this sentence is expressing a detail, not a main idea, and might be less appropriate as the first sentence.

The phrase *the rules* is also a clue. Since this sentence does not describe specifically what kind of rules, it means that the rules were probably mentioned in a previous sentence as well.

The sentence following (2C) says, *Likewise unsuccessful tactics cause players to fall behind their competitors*. "Likewise" in this context connects this sentence to the insertion sentence because *those* (players) *who . . . are penalized in some way* for not following the rules are like those players who use unsuccessful tactics in that both of them will fall behind their competitors. In other words, both of these types of players are being compared and these sentences can be connected by understanding the use of the transitional word "Likewise." Therefore,

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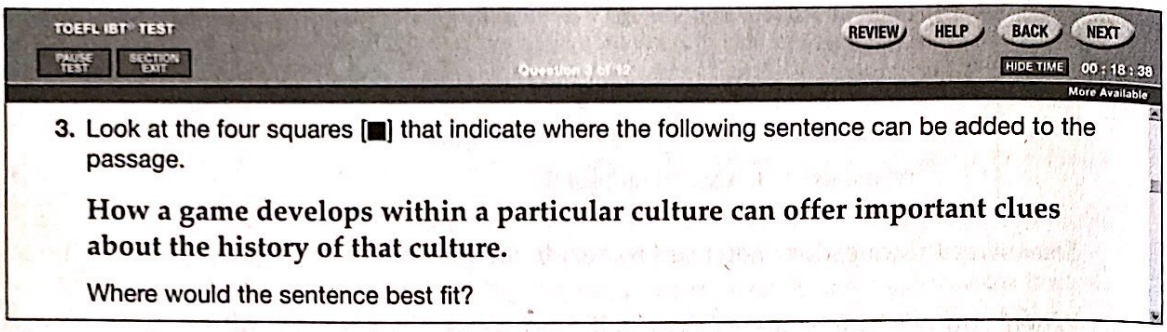
this sentence needs to be placed between (2B) and (2C). You should click on (2C) to insert the sentence in the correct location.

Look at another example of a sentence that can be inserted into the passage. (See paragraph 4.)



3. Look at the four squares [■] that indicate where the following sentence can be added to the passage.

How a game develops within a particular culture can offer important clues about the history of that culture.

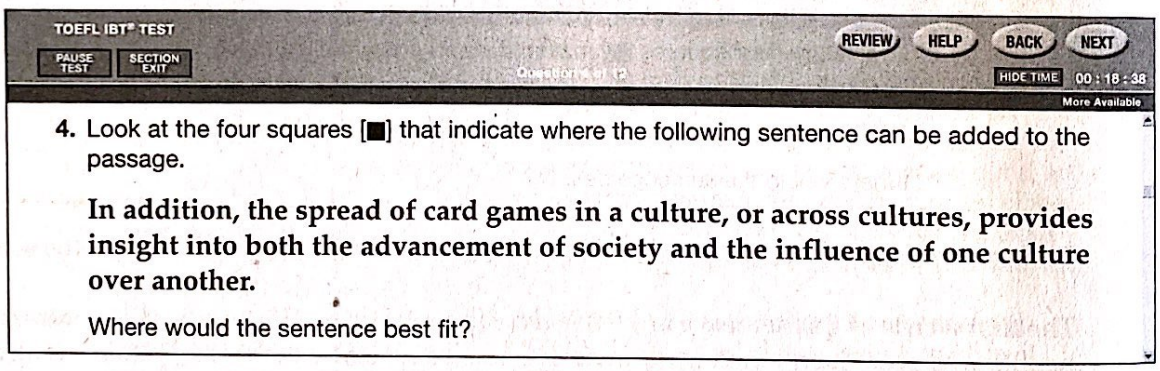
Where would the sentence best fit?

To answer this question, you need to decide the best place in paragraph 4 *to add* the sentence.

The first words of this sentence are *How a game develops*, which tells us that we are describing a method. To understand whether this sentence refers to a main idea or details, you need to skim the sentence choices in paragraph 4. All of the sentence choices discuss a specific category of games (*card games*).

Since the sentence you are inserting mentions games in general, it is a main idea sentence, and should be placed at the beginning of the paragraph, in front of sentence (3A). You should click on (3A) to insert the sentence in the correct location. You will also notice the insertion sentence mentions *the history of that culture* which connects it to the idea of *societies* evolving or changing *over time* in the sentence following (3A).

Look at another example of a sentence that can be inserted into the passage. (See paragraphs 5–6.)



4. Look at the four squares [■] that indicate where the following sentence can be added to the passage.

In addition, the spread of card games in a culture, or across cultures, provides insight into both the advancement of society and the influence of one culture over another.

Where would the sentence best fit?

To answer this question, you need to decide the best place in paragraph 5 or 6 *to add* the sentence.

The beginning of the sentence reads *In addition, the spread of card games . . . In addition* tells you that this is not the first idea discussed about the *spread of card games*. The latter part of the sentence mentions *both the advancement of society and the influence of one culture over another*. This indicates that this sentence should come in front of examples of how card games helped society move forward, as well as how cultures influenced one another through card games. The sentence introduces the two above mentioned concepts, so it is a main idea sentence and therefore, would most likely be at the beginning of a paragraph.

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When you read and understand the context of the sentences where you can choose to place the insertion sentence, you see that paragraph 6 provides an example of society advancing when it mentions how card games spread through societal classes (*The . . . printing press . . . made them more accessible . . . among the working classes . . .*). In paragraph 6, another example also mentions how cultures transferred important values (*The accessibility of the cards . . . also brought along with it the symbols of importance . . .*).

The best place to insert this sentence is at the beginning of paragraph 6, choice (4C). You should click on (4C) to insert the sentence in the correct location.

The following chart outlines the key points that you should remember about Inserting Sentences.

KEY POINTS FOR QUESTIONS ABOUT INSERTING SENTENCES	
FREQUENCY	Every reading passage includes just one.
WHERE TO FIND THE ANSWER	The squares are clearly marked in the passage. The test also usually automatically scrolls to the paragraph(s) with the squares.
HOW TO ANSWER THE QUESTION	1. Read the sentence to determine if it is stating a general idea or is talking about a specific example or detail. General ideas usually occur toward the beginning of the paragraph; an example or detail will typically follow the main idea sentence of a paragraph. 2. Look for referents, pronouns, or adjectives within the sentence that can be connected to an idea(s) in one of the sentences marked with a black square. 3. Look for connections between singular and plural nouns or pronouns in the sentence to be inserted and the marked sentences in the passage. 4. Look for transitional words or phrases (see chart above) that establish a relationship between ideas in the sentence in the question and the marked sentences in the passage. 5. Click on the square in front of the sentence in the passage where you want to place the insertion sentence. The insertion sentence is automatically placed in the passage and highlighted for you to see. 6. Once you click on the black square where you think the bolded sentence should be placed and it is inserted into the paragraph, read the sentence before, the inserted sentence, and the sentence after to double check that you have placed it in the best location. If you want to change the location, click on a different square and the insertion sentence will be moved.

In the exam, you may be able to eliminate incorrect answer choices by understanding what is wrong with them.

For Sentence Insertion questions, adding the sentence in incorrect locations may:
- interrupt the flow of ideas and separate sentences that belong together.
- insert referents, pronouns, adjectives, or transitional words and phrases that do not connect logically with the previous sentence.

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READING EXERCISE 4: Study each of the passages and choose the best answers to the questions that follow.

PASSAGE ONE (Questions 1–4)

Pararaph

Popcorn

1▶ **1A** Popcorn was first discovered and harvested in the Central American region of present-day Guatemala thousands of years ago. Today, it has become a worldwide favorite, inspiring various added flavors and methods of heating the kernels so they "pop" into the fluffy softened texture that can easily be eaten. **1B** The Native Americans who brought popcorn to the attention of European explorers believed that the individual corn kernels contained spirits. **1C** For those long-ago tribes, popcorn was considered an essential and nutritious part of the diet; for popcorn-eaters today, the treat is thought of as more of a snack than a necessary element of healthy eating. **1D**

2▶ **2A** This traditional Native American dish was quite a novelty to newcomers to the Americas. Columbus and his sailors found natives in the West Indies wearing popcorn necklaces, and explorer Hernando Cortes described the use of popcorn amulets in the religious ceremonies of the Aztecs. **2B** The Aztecs may have believed that wearing the amulets brought them favor in the eyes of their gods. **2C** Bringing popcorn to the Thanksgiving celebration symbolized the respect these Native Americans had for the new settlers and the hope they had for unity with them. **2D** According to legendary descriptions of the celebratory meal, Quadequina, the brother of Chief Massasoit, contributed several deerskin bags of the popped treat to the celebration.

3▶ Popcorn differs from the corn generally eaten directly off the cob, also known as "sweet" corn, in that the kernels of popcorn have a hard nonporous exterior than is practically impenetrable by moisture and a dense starchy center. This combination of factors allows for the buildup of intense pressure inside each kernel when it is heated sufficiently which consequently causes an explosive pop that forces the center of each kernel out of the hull, or outside covering, and into a variety of popcorn "flakes," as popped kernels are known as. In contrast, sweet corn has a much softer, porous hull which moisture can penetrate quite easily, thus preventing sweet corn kernels from achieving the amount of internal pressure necessary to make them pop.

4▶ **3A** The popping of corn started with relatively primitive techniques that involved some sort of roasting of the kernels over an open fire. **3B** One method of popping corn involved skewering an ear of corn on a stick and roasting it until the kernels popped off the ear. **3C** Corn was also popped by first cutting the kernels off the cob, throwing them into a fire, and gathering them as they popped out of the fire. **3D** In another method for popping corn, sand and unpopped kernels of corn were mixed together in a cooking pot and heated until the corn popped to the surface of the sand in the heated pot. As can be imagined, these techniques resulted in significant amounts of popcorn being overcooked, lost to the open environment, or going unpopped.

5▶ Modern methods of popping corn have removed many of the frustrations of earlier methods. **4A** Households developed more efficient methods of popping corn in small amounts with the development of indoor stoves on which metal kettles and pots could be placed. **4B** Electric air poppers were introduced in the twentieth century as a healthy alternative to popcorn steeped in oil over the stove's heat. **4C** As microwave oven use became more widespread in the late part of the twentieth century, microwaving popcorn became one of the most convenient and favored methods of making the snack. **4D**

6▶ In addition to the rise in popularity of making popcorn at home, the commercial market also took on the challenge of figuring out ways to produce it in larger quantities. A commercial breakthrough for popping corn in large amounts was made in the latter part of the nineteenth century, with Charles Cretors's invention of a large-scale popcorn machine. Cretors's invention increased the uniform heating of the kernels in mass numbers, which allowed for fewer unpopped kernels and more profit for vendors. His popcorn machine served as the prototype for many commercial machines used at large venues, such as stadiums and movie theaters. Alongside the introduction of this new popcorn machine, which made way for freshly popped corn to be served at public events, F.W. Rueckheim

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presented the first flavored popcorn, caramel corn. This flavor maintains its popularity today, partly due to his brother Louis's modification of the recipe, which created the first commercially packaged flavored popcorn, Cracker Jack®.

1. Look at the four squares [■] that indicate where the following sentence could be added to the first paragraph of the passage.

Consequently, the ancient peoples gave the popped food positions of honor in various religious ceremonies in addition to enjoying its taste.

Where would the sentence best fit? Click on a square [■] to add the sentence to the passage.

2. Look at the four squares [■] that indicate where the following sentence could be added to the second paragraph of the passage.

A century after the early explorers, the Pilgrims at Plymouth may have been introduced to popcorn at the first Thanksgiving dinner by the Wampanoag tribe.

Where would the sentence best fit? Click on a square [■] to add the sentence to the passage.

3. Look at the four squares [■] that indicate where the following sentence could be added to the fourth paragraph of the passage.

This tasty treat has been popped for at least 5,000 years, using a variety of different methods.

Where would the sentence best fit? Click on a square [■] to add the sentence to the passage.

4. Look at the four squares [■] that indicate where the following sentence could be added to the fifth paragraph of the passage.

It remains a very popular method for preparing the snack, since the treat pops up ready-to-eat in just a few minutes.

Where would the sentence best fit? Click on a square [■] to add the sentence to the passage.

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