

reading gapped text:
lexical and grammatical links (1)

- 1 Quickly read the text and paragraphs A–H and make a list of the ways companies spy on their employees.
- 2 Read the information on how to do gapped texts, then do a–c.

In a gapped text task you have to fit paragraphs into a text. When you are doing one, these types of words are often excellent clues.

- **reference words** like *this* and *us*. For example, in line 7 of the text, *It* refers back to *book* in line 5.
- **conjunctions** such as *in addition* and *though*. In line 20, *since* links *they can get your address and date of birth to voter registration forms* are a matter of public record in most states.
- **lexical links**, for example the use of synonyms, contrasts and repetition of the same word. In line 22, the word *days* contrasts with *minutes* in line 24.

- a Which words, within the same paragraph, do these words refer to?
her (line 32) *that* (line 40) *This* (line 84)
them (line 91)
- b Identify the clauses and / or sentences that these expressions link and think of another way of saying the same thing:
thus (line 60) *in short* (line 63) *even though* (line 74)
not only ... but (line 77)
- c Find lexical links with these in the same paragraph.
company (line 25) *employees* (line 27)
badge (line 56) *most* (line 67)

- 3 a You are going to read an article about how some American companies treat their employees. Choose from the paragraphs A–H the one which fits each gap (1–7). There is one extra paragraph which you do not need to use.
- b These questions will help you decide if you have put the paragraphs in the right places.
What do these words refer to?
this (line 22) *they* (line 48) *that* (line 55)
this (line 87)
What do these conjunctions link?
Conversely (line 25) *Still other* (line 30)
However (line 42) *For instance* (line 72)
What are the lexical links with these?
Internet (line 17) *pharmaceutical* (line 26)
these two bits of information (line 47) *court* (line 77)
methods (line 80) *these two firms* (line 96)

How Corporate America destroys privacy

Now here is something to remember should you ever find yourself using a changing cubicle in an American department store. It is perfectly legal – indeed, it is evidently routine – for the store to spy on you while you are trying on their clothes.

refers to last sentence, previous paragraph

links to next paragraph

1 C I know this because I have just been reading a book by Ellen Alderman and Caroline Kennedy called *The Right to Privacy*. It is full of alarming stories of ways that shops and employers can – and do – intrude into what would normally be considered private affairs.

links to previous paragraph

10 As the authors point out, nearly everyone is being spied on in some way in America these days. A combination of technological advances, employer paranoia and commercial greed means that many millions of Americans are having their lives delved into in ways that would not have been possible a dozen years ago.

2

Worse still, there are now electronic private investigators who make a living going through the Internet finding personal information on people. If you are an American resident and have ever registered to vote they can get your address and date of birth, since voter registration forms are a matter of public record in most states.

3

Most of this was possible before, but it would take days of inquiries and visits to various government offices. Now it can be done in minutes, in anonymity, through the Internet.

4

25 Conversely, one large, well-known company joined up with a pharmaceutical firm to go through the health records of employees to see who might benefit from a dose of antidepressants. The idea was that the company would get more serene workers, the drug company more customers.

5

30 Still other companies are secretly watching their employees at work. A secretary at a school in Massachusetts discovered that a hidden video camera was filming her office 24 hours a day. She is suing and will probably get lots of money. But elsewhere courts have upheld companies' right to spy on their workers.

6

35 Many large companies now prohibit employees from using tobacco or alcohol at any time, including at home. There are companies, if you can believe it, that forbid their employees to drink or smoke at any time – even one beer, even on a Saturday night – and enforce the rules by making their workers give urine samples. That is outrageous, but if people want a job, they must accept it.

7

However, there is one development, I am pleased to report, which makes all this worthwhile. A company in New Jersey has invented a device to determine whether restaurant employees have washed their hands after using the lavatory. Now that I can support.

A With these two bits of basic personal information, they can (and for as little as \$8 will) provide almost any information about anyone: court records, medical records, driving records, credit history, hobbies, buying habits, income, telephone numbers (including ex-directory ones). You name it: they'll find it.

B But company control gets even more sinister than that. Two big electronics firms working together have invented something called an 'active badge', which tracks the movements of any worker told to wear one. This little device sends out an infra-red signal every 15 seconds. The signal is picked up by a central computer, which is thus able to keep a record of where every employee is and has been, how many times they have been to the toilet or water-cooler – in short, to follow every single action of their working day. If that isn't ominous, I don't know what is.

C ~~I know this because I have just been reading a book by Ellen Alderman and Caroline Kennedy called The Right to Privacy. It is full of alarming stories of ways that shops and employers can – and do – intrude into what would normally be considered private affairs.~~

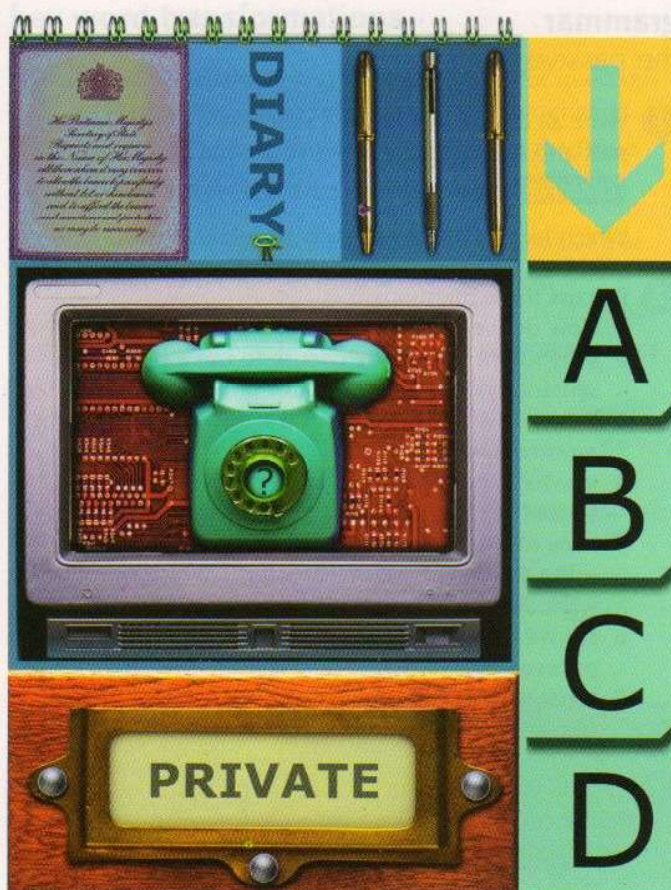
D On the contrary, he said that very few employees had complained. Most, he believed, were completely in favour of any such security system which helped the company prevent these types of crime occurring. Those few who criticised it, he seemed to be saying, were either naïve – or else had something to hide.

E For instance, when an employee of a large firm discovered it was routinely reading employees' e-mail, even though it had assured the employees that it was not, she blew the whistle and was promptly fired. She sued for unfair dismissal and lost the case. A court upheld the right of companies not only to review employees' private communications, but to lie to them about doing it. Whoa!

F One of the simplest methods of finding out about you, of course, is by checking where you go on the Internet. Log on and nearly every website you go to will make a record of what you looked at and how long you stayed there. This can, and usually will, then be sold on to mail order and marketing companies.

G Many countries are taking advantage of this to make their businesses more profitable. In Maryland, according to Time magazine, a bank searched through the medical records of its borrowers – apparently quite legally – to find out which of them had life-threatening illnesses, and used this information to cancel their loans. Other companies have focused on their own employees – for example, to check what prescription drugs they are taking.

H These two firms are not alone. In fact, according to the American Management Association, two-thirds of companies in the US spy on their employees in some way. Thirty-five per cent track phone calls and ten per cent even tape telephone conversations to review later. About a quarter of companies admit to going through their employees' computer files and reading their e-mail.



c Which linking expressions – reference, conjunction and/or lexical – made it impossible to fit the extra paragraph into any of the gaps?

- 4 1 In what way are *focus on* (line 94) and *spy on* (line 34) similar in meaning?
- 2 Find a verb and a noun in paragraph E that both mean 'losing her job'.
- 3 Identify two verbs in the paragraph from lines 35–41 that both mean 'ban'.
- 4 Which two phrasal verbs in paragraph B have contrasting meanings?
- 5 Use the context to work out the meanings of these words.
cubicle (line 2) *delve into* (line 14)
sue (line 33 and 76) *enforce* (line 39)
upheld (line 77) *log on* (line 82)
- 6 What do you think is the origin of the idiom *blow the whistle*? (line 75)
- 7 Which verb in line 8 does *do* refer to? Find other examples of this in paragraphs A and F.
- 5 Do you agree or disagree with the writer's opinion? Why? In what circumstances do you think people change their behaviour when they think they are being watched, and when does it probably make no difference?