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# Cambridge Linguaskill preparation: teaching “open cloze” questions with ludic activities

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### KEY POINTS

**Background:** In the French University of Technology where I am currently teaching English, I was able to implement a lesson plan created for the EVO2022 LLP course. Open cloze is one of the tasks on the Cambridge Linguaskill tests. This task in particular is dreaded by my students.

**Aim:** Show a practical example of how ludic activities can be used for official test preparation, in this case, the Cambridge Linguaskill business test, and help students succeed on the test.

**Methods:** To make open cloze tasks more enjoyable for my students and make them want to work on them, ludic activities were included in the lessons.

**Results:** By the end of the lessons, students felt more comfortable with open cloze tasks and results improved.

**Conclusion:** Ludic activities can be a valuable asset in language test preparation.

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### Tweet Synopsis

Students at a technical university play quiz games in class to prepare for the Linguaskill business test.

#TESOL #Linguaskill #quiz #LLP #university #testpreparation

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# Supplementary materials

## Appendix 1: Template collaborative document

Part of speech: auxiliary verbs	

Part of speech: modal verbs	

Part of speech: prepositions	

Part of speech: articles	

Part of speech: relative pronouns	

Part of speech: object pronouns	

Part of speech: conjunctions	

## Appendix 2: Open cloze practice 1 (Stress)

Stress (0) is often called a 21st century illness but it has always been with us if perhaps with different names. These days we regard stress (1) \_\_\_\_\_ a necessary evil of modern living. Yet stress is not negative and without (2) \_\_\_\_\_ we would not enjoy some of the highpoints in life (3) \_\_\_\_\_ as the anticipation before a date or the tension leading up to an important match. All these situations produce stress but (4) \_\_\_\_\_ you can control it and not the other way around, you will feel stimulated, not worn out. However, unlike these situations, (5) \_\_\_\_\_ are generally positive and easier to deal with, sitting in a train that is running late, (6) \_\_\_\_\_ stuck in a traffic jam or working to a tight deadline are much harder to manage and control and can be a significant cause of stress. Stress is now recognised as a medical problem and as a significant factor (7) \_\_\_\_\_ causing coronary heart disease, high blood pressure and a high cholesterol count. Patients are often unwilling to admit to stress problems since they feel they are a form of social failure, and it is important that symptoms (8) \_\_\_\_\_ identified in order to avoid unnecessary suffering.

Source: Joseph, F., & Travis, P. (n.d.). *CAE Practice test*. Retrieved 2022, from Flo-Joe: <https://www.flo-joe.co.uk/cae/students/tests/ocltst3.htm>

### Appendix 3: Detailed answer key for open cloze practice 1 (Stress)

Stress (0) is often called a 21st century illness but it has always been with us if perhaps with different names. These days we regard stress (1) **as** a necessary evil of modern living. Yet stress is not negative and without (2) **it** we would not enjoy some of the highpoints in life (3) **such** as the anticipation before a date or the tension leading up to an important match. All these situations produce stress but (4) **if** you can control it and not the other way around, you will feel stimulated, not worn out. However, unlike these situations, (5) **which** are generally positive and easier to deal with, sitting in a train that is running late, (6) **being** stuck in a traffic jam or working to a tight deadline are much harder to manage and control and can be a significant cause of stress. Stress is now recognised as a medical problem and as a significant factor (7) **in** causing coronary heart disease, high blood pressure and a high cholesterol count. Patients are often unwilling to admit to stress problems since they feel they are a form of social failure, and it is important that symptoms (8) **are** identified in order to avoid unnecessary suffering.

	Meaning	Function	Form
1.	Perception of stress in modern society	Comparing the way we look at "stress" with the way we look at "necessary evil"; <i>we look at them in the same manner.</i> ∅ <b>conjunction</b>	'in the same way that' ∅ <b>as</b> <b>NB:</b> when someone or something resembles another: <i>like</i> (preposition)
2.	Positive impact of stress	Avoid repetition, replaces "stress" which is mentioned at the beginning of the sentence ∅ <b>pronoun</b>	Thing, <b>3<sup>rd</sup> person singular</b> ∅ <b>it</b>
3.	Author is giving examples of some "highpoints" in life	Introducing examples, equivalent for preposition "like" <b>preposition</b> (UK) / <b>adverb</b> (AmE)	"_____ as" ∅ <b>such</b>
4.	Talking about a hypothetical future situation	<b>Conditional clause</b> , result	<b>1<sup>st</sup> conditional:</b> <b>if</b> + present simple, will + infinitive
5.	Talking about various stressful situations	Referring to "these situations" ∅ <b>relative pronoun</b>	Things ∅ <b>"which"</b>
6.	Give examples of activities that cause stress	You will need an <b>auxiliary</b> to complete the <b>activity</b> "_____ stuck"	<b>"be stuck"</b> , activity = <b>-ing</b> ∅ <b>being</b>
7.	Talking about the fact that stress is the cause of medical problems	Relation to something else "significant factor" ∅ <b>preposition</b>	in
8.	Talking about identifying symptoms to help patients realise they have a problem	<b>Passive</b> phrase, <b>present simple</b> ; "identified" = past participle; you need an auxiliary to complete "_____ identified".	<b>Passive:</b> form of "to be" + past participle Symptoms = <b>3<sup>rd</sup> person plural</b> (they) ∅ <b>are</b>

#### Appendix 4: Open cloze practice 2 (The death of the High Street)

It is often the case (0) that the principal street of an English town or city is called the High Street, and in the past it (1) \_\_\_\_\_ have been there that people used to meet, do business and go shopping. However, over the last few decades, Britain, (2) \_\_\_\_\_ other developed countries, has seen "giant" supermarkets and major new shopping centres springing (3) \_\_\_\_\_ on the outskirts of urban areas or in locations which are (4) \_\_\_\_\_ reached by car and which have ample parking. The appearance of these new temples of retailing is (5) \_\_\_\_\_ the result and the cause of the phenomenon (6) \_\_\_\_\_ as the "death of the High Street", a consequence of the fact that town or city centres had become ever (7) \_\_\_\_\_ inconvenient both for the retailers themselves and for (8) \_\_\_\_\_ customers. Once offered an alternative, shoppers and motorists were quick to flock to more modern and better-designed suburban shopping facilities, taking their business with them and so inevitably accelerating the closure of many of the smaller and most traditional shops, (9) \_\_\_\_\_ as butchers, fishmongers and greengrocers. These (10) \_\_\_\_\_ then replaced by the ubiquitous "charity shops", small retail outlets run (11) \_\_\_\_\_ non-profit organisations selling second-hand items given free by their supporters. These shops occupy (12) \_\_\_\_\_ were formerly prime locations in the High Street, but may only pay a minimal rent, and are staffed by volunteers to maximise the income (13) \_\_\_\_\_ the sale of old clothes, shoes, books or ornaments which fill their shelves. In the poorest regions of Britain (14) \_\_\_\_\_ is not uncommon to find three, four or more charity shops in a small High Street, a situation which is convenient for those who cannot afford to buy new, and for those who benefit (15) \_\_\_\_\_ the various services provided by the charities, but depressing for residents who remember the lively and prosperous High Streets of the past.

Source: Imparare Online LTD. (2016). *CAE Use of English: part 2 - 1*. Retrieved 2022, from ImparareInglese.com: [https://imparareinglese.com/esercizi\\_inglese/CAE\\_open\\_cloze\\_1.html](https://imparareinglese.com/esercizi_inglese/CAE_open_cloze_1.html)

#### ANSWER KEY

1. would
2. like
3. up
4. easily
5. both
6. known
7. more
8. their
9. such
10. were
11. by
12. what
13. from
14. it
15. from

## Appendix 6: Global timber shortages increase house prices

Global timber shortage increases house prices  
6th August 2021

A shortage of timber worldwide is causing a dearth in supply and major problems for the housing and construction industry. The decrease in the availability of timber has caused a sharp spike in the prices of newly built homes around the world. In some countries, the price builders pay for timber has shot up by about 25 per cent. One of the reasons builders are struggling to get supplies is because people have been repairing or reforming their homes during lockdown. Another reason is that post-lockdown construction and additional DIY projects have created "extraordinary demand". A timber trade federation said suppliers were "working around the clock" but are "struggling to keep up".

Environmental scientists assert that a major reason for the shortage is climate change. Global warming is increasing the pressure on the sustainability of forests. An increase in the number of wildfires is causing great damage to large swathes of forest. Many have been completely razed to the ground. The warmer weather has also caused a proliferation in the number of pests that cause damage to trees and stunt tree growth. Sweden, which supplies almost half of the wood used in the UK, has recorded its lowest timber stocks for 20 years. A solution the UK has come up with is to plant more trees. It said it is "committed to trebling tree planting rates". A builder joked that he didn't have time for those trees to grow.

Source: Banville, S. (2021, Aug. 6). *Global timber shortage increase house prices*.  
[www.breakingnewsenglish.com](https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2108/210806-timber-shortage.html). <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2108/210806-timber-shortage.html>

## Appendix 7: India to launch \$1.35 trillion infrastructure plan

India to launch \$1.35 trillion infrastructure plan

18th August 2021

India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi has announced a huge financial package for his country's economy. Mr Modi outlined plans for spending \$1.35 trillion on infrastructure at an Independence Day speech on August the 15th. The huge investment will focus on the economy, youth employment opportunities, and on ways to tackle climate change. Modi hopes the gargantuan injection of cash will provide a boost to the economy. He said the spending plans will "create job opportunities for hundreds of thousands of young people". He added that the stimulus would help local manufacturers to become "globally competitive," and develop new "economic zones" in India.

Mr Modi focused on plans to make India a carbon-neutral country. He gave his speech as part of India's 75th Independence Day celebrations. He vowed that before India turned 100, the country would be "energy independent". Modi pledged to invest more in sustainable resources such as solar technology and "green hydrogen". He wants the country to move away from its reliance on oil. India is the world's third-largest oil importer. In particular, he outlined ambitious plans for transforming India's vast railway network – the largest in the world. He said he wants the whole network to be a net-zero carbon emitter by 2030. Modi said his country is "moving fast towards achieving its climate goals".

Source: Banville, S. (2021, Aug. 18). *India to launch \$1.35 trillion infrastructure plan*.

[www.breakingnewsenglish.com. https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2108/210818-india-infrastructure.html](https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2108/210818-india-infrastructure.html)

## Appendix 8: Japan to give children under 19 \$880 cash handout

Japan to give children under 19 \$880 cash handout  
8th November 2021

Japanese children may soon have smiles on their faces and money in their pockets. As part of a covid-19-related stimulus package, Japan's government is planning to give ¥100,000 (\$880) to all children under the age of 19. Around 20 million children, from new-borns to 18-year-olds, will receive the one-time payment. The initiative is part of an election pledge from Japan's newly elected Prime Minister. During campaigning, he vowed to help "people in need," such as part-time workers and families with small children. Officials say the money will be given regardless of the financial status of a child's family. All children in any one family will receive the cash. The plan is expected to cost around ¥2 trillion (\$17.6 billion). The stimulus package is not without its critics. Many people have reservations about splurging so much money when Japan is burdened with so much debt. The country's debt is currently more than twice the size of its economy. Government sources argue the cash is available for the pandemic stimulus because of a surplus of funds from fiscal 2020. Sceptics are questioning the plan's logic. They said most recipients would not be going out to purchase high-cost items, dine in upmarket restaurants or take domestic holidays. It is predicted that much of the money will end up in savings accounts. However, mother of three Yuki Ono welcomed the plan. She said her children would benefit because they will buy new computers.

Source: Banville, S. (2021, Nov. 8). *Japan to give children under 19 \$880 cash handout*.  
[www.breakingnewsenglish.com](https://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/2111/211108-cash-handout.html). <https://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/2111/211108-cash-handout.html>



## Appendix 9: Job offers \$30 an hour for eating and testing candy

Job offers \$30 an hour for eating and testing candy  
26th January 2021

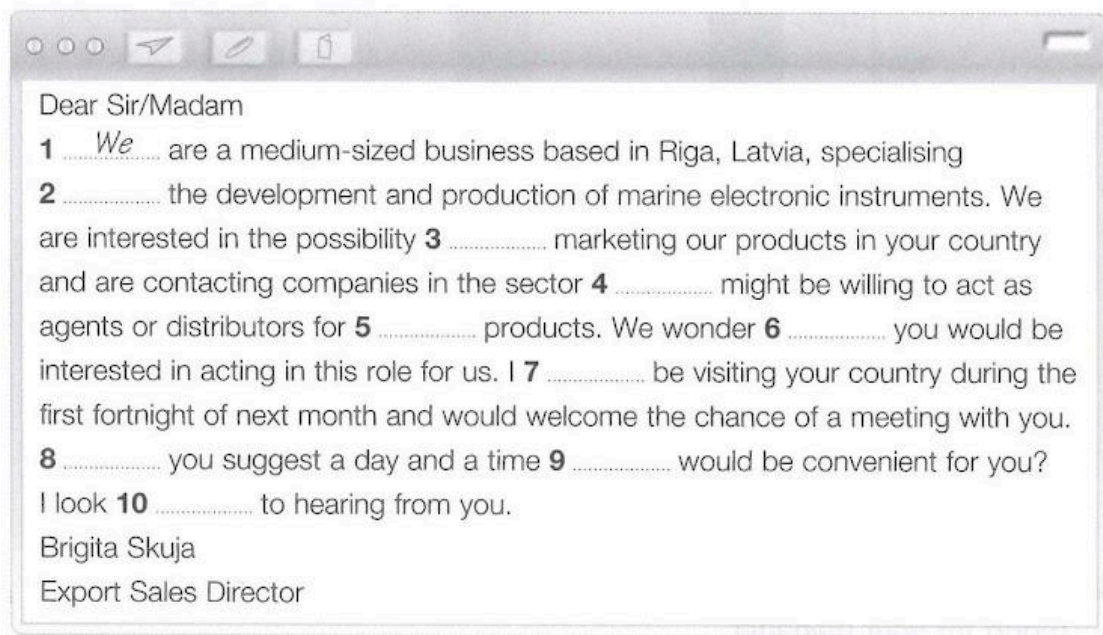
The sweetest way to earn some extra cash is on offer for those with a sweet tooth. A candy company in Canada is searching for people to taste and review its original creations for the sweet sum of \$30 an hour. The company is called Candy Funhouse and it requires "candyologists" to test and provide feedback on its candy and chocolate products. The company currently has a huge range of 3,000 products but is always creating new sweets. The candyologists will be responsible for deciding on 10 new candies that will be part of a new line of Candy Funhouse-branded sweets. Candy Funhouse hopes to establish a global reputation as a quality confectioner.

The successful applicants will need a number of basic requirements and qualifications. The company states on its website: "Candidates should have enthusiasm and eagerness to try confectionery products. We are looking for honest and objective opinions on the products that will be taste tested." They will have to write a brief, two-sentence description for each product tested. Budding candyologists must be "passionate about confectionery," not have any food allergies, be fluent in English and have basic writing skills. They must also be U.S. or Canadian citizens and be willing to work in Ontario. The candyologists will "taste samples objectively" and "consider aspects of taste, texture and quality".

Source: Banville, S. (2021, January 26). *Job offers \$30 an hour for eating and testing candy*. [www.breakingnewsenglish.com](https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2101/210126-candy.html). <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2101/210126-candy.html>

## Appendix 10: Open cloze practice 3 (Email 1)

1 Complete this email by writing one word in each gap.



Dear Sir/Madam

1 *We* are a medium-sized business based in Riga, Latvia, specialising  
2 the development and production of marine electronic instruments. We  
are interested in the possibility 3 marketing our products in your country  
and are contacting companies in the sector 4 might be willing to act as  
agents or distributors for 5 products. We wonder 6 you would be  
interested in acting in this role for us. I 7 be visiting your country during the  
first fortnight of next month and would welcome the chance of a meeting with you.  
8 you suggest a day and a time 9 would be convenient for you?  
I look 10 to hearing from you.

Brigita Skuja  
Export Sales Director

Source: Brook-Hart, Guy. 2013. *Business benchmark upper intermediate (Personal Study Book)*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013

## Appendix 11: Open cloze practice 4 (Email 2)

Complete this letter by putting one word in each gap.

Dear Mr Allen,

Thank you **1** ..... *for* ..... your letter of 14 June in **2** ..... you apply for a Young Entrepreneur's Grant to help you set **3** ..... your business.

We would be very happy **4** ..... consider your application and in any case offer **5** ..... advice which you may find useful. We would like to invite you to **6** ..... interview where we can discuss your application **7** ..... Monday 1 July.

Please telephone me to **8** ..... me know if the date is convenient or, if **9** ..... , to arrange a different **10** .....

Yours sincerely,

Gudrun Lear

Source: Brook-Hart, Guy. 2013. *Business benchmark upper intermediate (Personal Study Book)*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013

## Appendix 12: Open cloze practice 5 (Wholesale pallets)

### Part Two

#### Section Three

#### Questions 87–91

- For questions **87–91**, read the text below and think of the word which best fits each space.
- Write only **one** word for each space on your Answer Sheet.

#### Example:

He is very interested (0) ..... computers.

#### Answer:

0	in	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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#### Wholesale Pallets

Wholesale pallets contain similar goods that have been batched together to be sold on at trade prices. For example, a wholesaler may offer an electronics pallet (87) ..... may contain several TVs, DVD players and games consoles.

Pallets are a good example of why you should check the condition of wholesale goods before you buy them. They can be excellent buys (88) ..... your business, and you can save a substantial amount of your wholesaling budget.

However, the downside is that they can be carelessly put together and the quality of the goods varies (89) ..... batch to batch. Many pallets are unchecked by the wholesaler, (90) ..... be particularly careful when buying them, as you may end up spending a lot of money on damaged goods. Get assurance from the wholesaler and if you are still not happy, the wholesaler should (91) ..... you check the batches yourself.

Source: Clark, D. 2006. *Essential BULATS*. Cambridge : Cambridge university Press, 2006.

## Appendix 13: Open cloze practice 6 (Customer service)

### Part One

#### Section Four

#### Questions 70–74

- For questions 70–74, read the text below and think of the word which best fits each space.
- Write only **one** word for each space on your Answer Sheet.

#### Example:

He is very interested (0) ..... computers.

#### Answer:

0	in	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
---	----	----------------------	----------------------

Dear Customer

We are writing to ask you to take part in Johnson's latest customer survey (70) ..... that we can find out if you are happy with our service.

We'd also like your views on some new developments at Johnson's. The survey data is being recorded (71) ..... NSB Research, an independent research agency. This will ensure that all data is passed on to Johnson's anonymously – Johnson's won't even know which customers (72) ..... taken part in the survey.

The questions are all online, short and straightforward, and should only take about 15 minutes (73) ..... total. All survey participants will (74) ..... entered into a draw to win €1,000 of travel vouchers.

The closing date for completion of the survey is 9th May. We look forward to hearing from you at [www.marketsearchers.com](http://www.marketsearchers.com).

Source: Clark, D. 2006. *Essential BULATS*. Cambridge : Cambridge university Press, 2006.

## Appendix 14: Collaborative notepad

Study the word cloud you created on *Mentimeter* and add the words to the parts of speech below. Then use an online concordancer to find meaningful sample phrases with those words.

<b>Part of speech:</b> articles	

<b>Part of speech:</b> auxiliary verbs	

<b>Part of speech:</b> conjunctions	

<b>Part of speech:</b> modal verbs	

<b>Part of speech:</b> object pronouns	

<b>Part of speech:</b> prepositions	

<b>Part of speech:</b> relative pronouns	

## Appendix 15: Combined results

<b>Part of speech:</b> articles	<i>A, an, the</i>
<p>At that time it was very much more of <a href="#">A</a> family firm than it is now.  He was made <a href="#">A</a> freeman of the City of Birmingham in 1982.  The principal customer needs are incorporated in <a href="#">A</a> standardised design.  Making <a href="#">A</a> better product is naturally still an important thing [...]  At least <a href="#">AN</a> "equivalent" level of detail should be provided [...]  Standards were set within <a href="#">THE</a> firm rather than externally [...]  [...] the focus of marketing attention changed from <a href="#">THE</a> product to the customer.  Profit remained <a href="#">THE</a> sole objective [...]</p>	
<b>Part of speech:</b> auxiliary verbs	<i>Do, be, have, am, is, are</i>
<p>I find it hard to see how you can <a href="#">HAVE</a> an absolutely clear sense of direction [...]  [...] you <a href="#">HAVE</a> to work within the terms of the licence [...]  They are better than me at some things. I <a href="#">AM</a> better than them at other things.  Attention <a href="#">IS</a> focused on the external environment [...]  The principal customer needs <a href="#">ARE</a> incorporated in a standardised design.  Today many brands <a href="#">ARE</a> sold commercially for far less.</p>	
<b>Part of speech:</b> conjunctions	<i>And, but, because, or, so, furthermore, besides, indeed</i>
<p>Such bids are regularly submitted <a href="#">BUT</a> only account for a very small amount of stock [...]  I hadn't asked to do it, <a href="#">BUT</a> in fact found it very interesting [...]  I'm always a little cautious about leadership, <a href="#">BECAUSE</a> I'm never absolutely certain what it means.  Marketing efforts should therefore be directed at one <a href="#">OR</a> two such potential key customers.  Needs will often differ from one country to another, <a href="#">OR</a> from one market segment to another.  <a href="#">FURTHERMORE</a>, commodity production is being increasingly subdivided [...]  [...] accordingly, one participant could contribute capital (if <a href="#">INDEED</a> any is needed), another know - how and a third services.  This was <a href="#">INDEED</a> good advice [...]  [...] but perhaps most clearly because there is <a href="#">INDEED</a> a powerful and growing critique of professionals in our society  The publication of this Guide to Exporting is <a href="#">INDEED</a> opportune.</p>	



Part of speech: modal verbs	<i>Can, must, could, will, should, may</i>
<p>[...] three general periods and approaches to marketing <b>CAN</b> be identified.          [...] average incomes <b>CAN</b> be compared between one country and another [...]          He <b>MUST</b> be educated with professional expertise [...]          Whatever your programme, certain basic rules <b>MUST</b> be obeyed.          [...] franchisees <b>MUST</b> agree to adopt a community project.          [...] international marketing researchers <b>MUST</b> analyse a number of national markets.          We asked ourselves what we <b>COULD</b> do to make the shops busy.          Any significant differences <b>COULD</b> have implications for the selection of advertising media [...]          Which product markets <b>WILL</b> be targeted?          [...] but it is assumed that their development <b>WILL</b> follow a similar pattern.          As far as possible, this <b>SHOULD</b> be avoided [...]</p>	

Part of speech: object pronouns	<i>Him, her, it, you, me</i>
<p>And it is convenient to consider <b>HIM</b> as an entrepreneur [...]          In the letter he said "If I hear no more about <b>HIM</b>, I consider the horse mine."          [...] Lloyds Bank released the bills back to <b>HIM</b> so that he could sell them [...]          And with that took Mrs Thatcher's arm and led <b>HER</b> off.          I checked <b>HER</b> out with the FBI [...]          Here "Can I do <b>IT</b>?" is the question.          [...] the law says that <b>YOU</b> must be compensated for any damage suffered [...]</p>	

Part of speech: prepositions	<i>Behind, over, in, on, to, for, of, from, with, about, by</i>
<p>It's an experience he is glad to put <b>BEHIND</b> him [...]          [...] a truly professional manager can take <b>OVER</b> the helm of any type of business [...]          You don't want to under - or <b>OVER</b> - estimate your strength.          The old idea of marketing, which <b>IN</b> many cases was little more than selling, focuses on [...].          The managing director's wife enjoys going there <b>ON</b> holiday!          [...] care should be taken before making the decision <b>ON</b> how to react.          [...] creating benefits <b>FOR</b> stakeholders is seen as the ultimate objective [...]          I'm very sceptical of the ability to shift <b>FROM</b> managing a bank to managing a steel mill [...]          Needs will often differ <b>FROM</b> one country to another [...]          I have grave doubts <b>ABOUT</b> that.          [...] he was vague <b>ABOUT</b> the specific role he would play.</p>	

Part of speech: relative pronouns	<i>Why, which, what</i>
<p>which is <b>WHY</b> he was never in favour of a company town.          Your job is to help your subordinate understand <b>WHY</b> certain objectives must be achieved          gather data about different countries in <b>WHICH</b> they sell their products          The conditions under <b>WHICH</b> trade may be carried out          There was then the decision about <b>WHAT</b> should happen to the foods division.          [...] but I didn't have a clear view as to <b>WHAT</b> particular part of the business I was interested in.          At the end of the day, that is <b>WHAT</b> it all turns on.</p>	