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Working with texts in the English lessons

Task 1

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BEFECTETÉS A JÖVŐBE



Task 1

Below is an excerpt from a text in an advanced coursebook. At this point, please DO NOT open the link yet. First decide which word, A or B would complete the text best. Then try to identify what kind of knowledge you had recourse to in order to choose the correct answer.

What makes us human?

4. Language

Many species communicate with vocal sounds. But language is a special form of (1)_____. Full language, with rules for combining sounds into words, and words into (2)_____, probably originated at some point about 50,000 years (3)_____. But we will probably never know precisely when and where language originated. Fossils, DNA evidence, comparisons with other animals, and studies how languages change over time all (4)_____ clues, but spoken language itself leaves (5)_____ traces. It most likely evolved from a simple form of communication. Chimpanzees use both gestures and vocal calls to communicate status and other complex (6)_____ information. It is possible that our ancestors also expressed themselves first with gestures or simple words, then developed rules for linking them into sentences.

(Headway Advanced, 4th edition, p. 9.)

1. A communication B communicate

Kind of knowledge employed:

2. A phonemes B sentences

Kind of knowledge employed:



Key

1. **Communication** / communicate – Linguistic knowledge (grammar): from the position in the sentence and the presence of the preposition, we know that a noun is required here
2. phonemes / **sentences** – topic knowledge: we know that sounds are combined into words and words, in turn into bigger groups of words – which might be phrases or sentences. But definitely not phonemes as those are units at a lower level, the sound level.
3. Later / **ago** – Linguistic knowledge (discourse): there was no point in time mentioned in the text before this phrase – therefore “later” would make no sense, there is no comparison.
4. **Provide** / provides – Linguistic knowledge (grammar): from the enumeration and the word “all” we know that a plural verb is required here.
5. **Few** / many – Linguistic knowledge (discourse): in this context “many” would make no sense after the conjunction “but”, which implies a contrast with all the clues listed before.
Might also be general knowledge and topic knowledge: many of us know or at least can guess that *spoken* language is very difficult to trace back – recording speech by any means is a fairly modern invention.
6. biological / **social** - Topic knowledge combined with linguistic knowledge (discourse): “other” refers back to status, and that is a social concept

And with all of them, of course: the knowledge of the meaning of the words in the text.