Reading: Gap-fill

Our 'dead' products are 'static', closed systems. It is always the basic material which constitutes the object and which, in the natural course of things, is worn down and becomes 'older'. Ageing in this case must occur according to the laws of physical chemistry and of thermodynamics. Although the same law holds for a living organism, the result of this law is not inexorable in the same way. At least as long as a biological system has the ability to renew itself it could actually become older without ageing; an organism is an open, dynamic system through which new material continuously flows.

Thus ageing and death should not be seen as inevitable, particularly as the organism possesses many mechanisms for repair. It is not, in principle, necessary for a biological system to age and die. Nevertheless, a restricted life span, ageing, and then death are basic characteristics of life. The reason for this is easy to recognise: in nature, the existent organisms either adapt or are regularly replaced by new types. Because of changes in the genetic material (mutations) these have new characteristics and in the course of their individual lives they are tested for optimal or better adaptation to the environmental conditions. Immortality would disturb this system – it needs room for new and better life. This is the basic problem of evolution.

Choose NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS from the passage for each answer.

Objects age in accordance with principles of 1 …… and of

2 ……

Through mutations, organisms can 3 …… better to the environment.

4 …… would pose a serious problem for the theory of evolution.

(Cambridge IELTS 8)

READING: GAP-FILL

Approach

1 Read the question and be sure how many words/ numbers you are allowed to use.
2 Read all the section and underline the key words.

> *Objects age in accordance with principles of 1 …… and of 2 ……*
> *Through mutations, organisms can 3 …… better to the environment.*
> *4 …… would pose a serious problem for the theory of evolution.*

3 Predict the type of word you need (noun, verb, adjective, adverb).

> *Objects age in accordance with principles of 1* **noun** *and of 2* **noun**
> *Through mutations, organisms can 3* **verb** *better to the environment.*
> *4* **noun** *would pose a serious problem for the theory of evolution.*

4 Predict any answers based on knowledge of collocations (words that naturally come together).

> *Through mutations, organisms can 3* **adapt** *better to the environment.*

5 Read the first line again and scan for the first key word. Keep scanning for the following key words until you find the answer. You will find clear synonyms and sometimes exactly the same word as the key words.

6 Sometimes you need to recognise the pronouns and look back to previous sentences for the noun they are referring to.

> *Objects age in accordance with principles of 1* **noun** *and of 2* **noun**

Objects – found 'object'
age – found 'Ageing'
accordance – found 'according to'
principles – found 'laws'

> *Our 'dead' products are 'static', closed systems. It is always the basic material which constitutes the object and which, in the natural course of things, is worn down and becomes 'older'. Ageing in this case must occur*

according to the laws of physical chemistry and of thermodynamics. Although the same law holds for a living organism, the result of this law is not inexorable in the same way. At least as long as a biological system has the ability to renew itself it could actually become older without ageing; an organism is an open, dynamic system through which new material continuously flows.

7 See the pattern of the sentence in the question and compare it to in the text – sometimes they are exactly the same – especially when there are two words separated by 'and'.

Question: principles of 1 ..... *and of 2* .....
Text: laws of physical chemistry and of thermodynamics.

8 Remember to check that the word is in its correct form to fit grammatically into the answer sentence – you might need to change it.

No change here.
Answer: 1 physical chemistry
2 thermodynamics

.....

Try the approach again with question 3.

Through mutations, organisms can 3 **verb** *better to the environment.*

5 Scan for the first key word and then look for the following ones.

6 Sometimes you need to recognise the pronouns and look back to previous sentences for the noun they are referring to (see 'these' referring to 'organisms').

Mutations – found 'mutations'
organisms – found 'these' referring back to 'organisms' in the previous sentence
can – not found
better – found 'better'
environment – found 'environmental'

Thus ageing and death should not be seen as inevitable, particularly as the organism possesses many mechanisms for repair. It is not, in principle, necessary for a biological system to age and die. Nevertheless, a restricted life span, ageing, and then death are basic characteristics of life. The reason for this is easy to recognise: in nature, the existent organisms either adapt or are regularly replaced by new types. Because of changes in the genetic material (mutations) these have new characteristics and in the course of their individual lives they are tested for optimal or better adaptation to the

environmental conditions. Immortality would disturb this system – it needs room for new and better life. This is the basic problem of evolution.

7 See the pattern of the sentence in the question and compare it to in the text – sometimes they are exactly the same.

Question: *organisms can 3 ..... better to the environment.*
Text: they are tested for optimal or better adaptation to the environmental conditions.

8 Check the word is in its correct form.

Here we need to change it from a noun to a verb.

Answer: 3 adapt

.....

And again.

5 Scan for the first key word and then look for the following ones.

4 ..... would pose a serious problem for the theory of evolution.

would – found 'would'
pose a serious problem – found 'disturb' and 'basic problem'
theory – not found
evolution – found 'evolution'

Thus ageing and death should not be seen as inevitable, particularly as the organism possesses many mechanisms for repair. It is not, in principle, necessary for a biological system to age and die. Nevertheless, a restricted life span, ageing, and then death are basic characteristics of life. The reason for this is easy to recognise: in nature, the existent organisms either adapt or are regularly replaced by new types. Because of changes in the genetic material (mutations) these have new characteristics and in the course of their individual lives they are tested for optimal or better adaptation to the environmental conditions. Immortality would disturb this system – it needs room for new and better life. This is the basic problem of evolution.

6 Sometimes you need to recognise the pronouns and look back to previous sentences for the noun they are referring to ('This' refers back to 'immortality')

Question: 4 ..... *would pose a serious problem for the theory of evolution.*
Text: This is the basic problem of evolution.

7 See the pattern of the sentence in the question and compare it to in the text – sometimes they are exactly the same.

Answer: 4 Immortality