

Justifications

Website Sample Reading Task: Sequencing

Cuban Missile Crisis

Example 0

The penultimate sentence of paragraph 1 refers to the “1958 deployment of [...] IRBMs in the UK and [...] in Italy [...] having the capability to strike Moscow”. The year 1958 is the earliest date mentioned in the paragraph and so precedes the event described in the second sentence of the same paragraph, which took place in 1962. The abbreviation “IRBM” has already been explained earlier in the text as “intermediate-range ballistic nuclear missile[s]”; “aimed at” refers to the same purpose of use as “having the capability to strike”. Moscow was the capital of the Soviet Union; Italy and the UK are in Europe.

Therefore item J – **“Nuclear weapons aimed at the Soviet Union were placed in parts of Europe”** – is the first event and the correct answer to the example item 0.

Q1

The second sentence of paragraph 1 states that “In September 1962, the Cuban and Soviet governments began to surreptitiously build bases in Cuba for a number of medium- and intermediate-range ballistic nuclear missiles.” “Bases for missiles” are a type of “military facility”; “surreptitiously” means “secret”; “build” means “construct”.

Therefore item I – **“The secret construction of military facilities began in Cuba”** – is the correct answer to Q1 and the next event in the sequence.

Confirmation is provided by the beginning of sentence 3 - **“This** action followed [...]”, which makes it clear that the events of sentence 2 happened after those of sentence 3.

Q2

The final sentence of paragraph 1 states that “On October 14, 1962, a United States U-2 photoreconnaissance plane captured photographic proof of Soviet missile bases under construction in Cuba”. “Proof means “evidence”; “under construction” means “half-completed”; “missile bases” and “weapons sites” refer to the same type of facility.

Therefore item C – **“The U.S. obtained evidence of half-completed nuclear weapons sites”** – is the correct answer to Q2 and the next event.

Q3

The third sentence of paragraph 2 states that “The U.S. announced that it would not permit offensive weapons to be delivered to Cuba and demanded that the Soviets dismantle the missile bases”. “Demanded” and “told” mean the same here; to “dismantle” something means to stop using or “operating” it by taking it apart. The “delivery of weapons” by the Soviets was part of the joint operation of building bases. Therefore item G – **“The Soviets were told to stop their operations in Cuba”** – is the correct answer to Q3 and the next event.

Q4

The final sentence of paragraph 2 states that “On the Soviet end, Nikita Khrushchev wrote in a letter to Kennedy that his quarantine of ‘navigation in international waters and air space [constituted] an act of aggression propelling humankind into the abyss of a world nuclear-missile war’”. The phrase “On the Soviet end, Nikita Khrushchev [...]” suggests that Khrushchev represents the Soviet side, confirmed later in paragraph 3 by the phrase “Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev”. The same paragraph also makes it explicit that Kennedy is the President of the U.S.: “President John F. Kennedy”. The U.S. actions are described by Khrushchev as “an act of aggression” and the use of the words “abyss of [...] war” further underlines Khrushchev’s negative view of U.S. action. Therefore, item B – **“The Soviet leader criticised the U.S. President’s actions”** – is the correct answer to Q4 and the next event.

Q5

The first sentence of paragraph 3 states that “The Soviets [...] in secret back-channel communications initiated a proposal to resolve the crisis”. The phrase “in secret back-channel communications” and “privately” describe the same covert process; “initiated a proposal” is a more formal way of saying “made a suggestion”; a “crisis” is a “severe problem”. Therefore item A – **“The Soviets privately made a suggestion for solving the problem”** – is the correct answer to Q5 and the next event.

Q6

The second sentence of paragraph 3 states that “The confrontation ended on October 28, 1962 when President John F. Kennedy and United Nations Secretary-General U Thant reached an agreement with Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev [...]”. “The confrontation ended” means the same as the “The crisis finished”. The three people involved in the negotiations are mentioned in this sentence. Therefore item E – **“The crisis finished after three-way negotiations”** – is the correct answer to Q6 and the next event.

Q7

The penultimate sentence of paragraph 3 states: “The quarantine was formally ended at 6:45 p.m. EDT on November 20, 1962”. The phrase “military ‘quarantine’” is used earlier in paragraph 2 to describe the action adopted by the U.S. instead of invasion. It is used here – metaphorically – to describe the act of isolating a territory. “Blockade” refers to the same process of isolating. Therefore item D – **“The US stopped its military blockade of Cuba”** – is the correct answer to Q7 and the next event.

Q8

The last sentence of paragraph 3 states that “[...] all US-built Thor and Jupiter IRBMs deployed in Europe were deactivated [...]”. IRBMs have earlier been identified as “nuclear missiles” (paragraph 1, sentence 3). “Deactivated” and disabled” mean the same. Therefore item H – **“Nuclear weapons in Europe were disabled”** is the correct answer to Q8 and the final event.

Distractor F

The text states in paragraph 2, sentence 2, that the U.S. “considered attacking Cuba by air and sea and settled on a military ‘quarantine’”. The blockade was substituted for the invasion, which never took place. Therefore item F - **“The U.S. invaded Cuba”** – is false.