

*Ultimate IELTS Series Book 3*

# *READING*

*for IELTS*

*Question types,  
practice exercises,  
tips and hints*

*Written and developed by Impact Learning*

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## About the IELTS General Training reading test

The IELTS reading test takes 60 minutes to complete, has three sections and a total of 40 questions. You need to make sure that your answers are transferred to the answer sheet *within* the 60 minutes as no extra time is given at the end of the test.

The General Training Module has three sections. Section 1 and 2 have two or three sections each, and Section 3 has a single, longer passage ranging between 700 to 1000 words. The sections become increasingly difficult from Section 1 to Section 3.

Section 1 may contain 2 or 3 short texts or several shorter texts such as advertisements, Section 2 usually comprises 2 texts with a work related focus and in Section 3 there is 1 long text.

In Sections 1 and 2 you need to show that you are able to understand the type of information you may come across in your day to day life. While preparing for Sections 1 and 2 of the General Training IELTS test, it is a good idea to get into the habit of reading as much of this real life information as you can. For example, advertisements you may see in newspapers, information booklets or promotional material that you may find in the library, receive in the post or find on the internet. You will find that the information you need to read increases in difficulty as you move from section 1 to section 2 to section 3. Make sure that you leave enough time in the test to answer section 3 as this is where you are likely to find the most difficult vocabulary and questions.

For Section 3, the topics are based on articles from journals, academic magazines, articles and other sources.

### IELTS reading test question types

1. Headings style questions
2. Locating information in a paragraph
3. True / False / Not Given questions
4. Short answer questions

5. Sentence completion questions
6. Form/summary/table/flowchart/notes completion questions
7. Labelling a diagram
8. Matching and classifying
9. Multiple choice

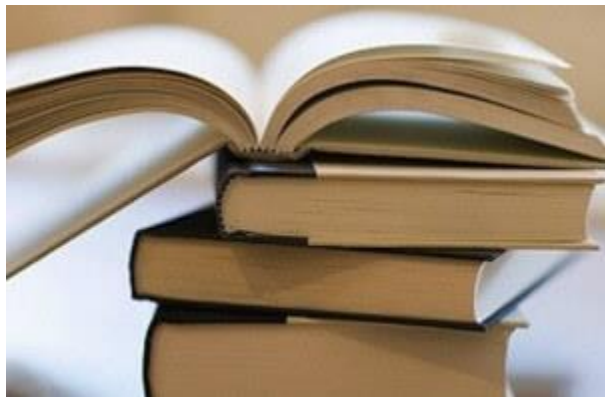
## IELTS reading all question types

There are 8 common question types in IELTS reading. On this page, you will see an example of each type based on the reading text below.

Important note: the questions used on this page are to demonstrate the types of question used in the IELTS reading test – they are **MUCH EASIER** than you could expect in the IELTS test.

### **THE IELTS TEST**

**A** The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) was launched worldwide in 1989. The tests are produced by the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES), and jointly managed by the British Council and IDP Australia. There are over 250 test centres in 105 countries around the world, figures which are increasing almost monthly as the IELTS test continues to become more popular. From 1999 to 2001, the number of candidates sitting the test increased dramatically from just over one hundred thousand to well over two hundred thousand.



**B** The IELTS has two formats. One is the general test, which is taken mostly by people looking for residency in English speaking countries. The other is the academic test, preferred by nearly 80% of candidates as the results determine whether candidates can join academic courses held

in English. Accounting for 13% of these, New Zealand is surpassed only by Great Britain and Australia. Although there is no standardised score for tertiary or high school entry, students looking to join a foundation course at university are often aiming for a score of 5.5, and those looking to complete a postgraduate course of study generally need 6.0 or more. In the USA, for example, over 170 universities accept students with a suitable IELTS score.

**C** The IELTS test has four sections, testing the four skills – reading, writing, listening and speaking. The reading test has three passages, totalling between 2,000 and 2,800 words. The texts are taken from magazines, journals, books and newspapers, and are specifically chosen to be of ‘general’ interest. That is, no specialist knowledge is required to understand, although they are aimed at an academic level and require a good standard of vocabulary. There are a number of topics, such as the environment or social issues, around which IELTS readings often revolve. You have one hour to complete the test, which comprises 40 questions based on the reading texts (generally between 12 and 18 questions per text). The questions may come before or after the reading, and you will not necessarily get every type of question. You will not be given additional time to transfer your answers to the answer paper.

**D** The writing test consists of two parts – Task I and Task II. Again, this section of the test is aimed at an academic level and requires a good standard of vocabulary and is based on the same possible topics as the reading. You have one hour in which to complete both tasks, with the recommendation that you spend 20 minutes writing the 150 words required for Task I and 40 minutes completing the 250-word Task II. In Task I, you will have to describe information given in a chart, graph or illustration, and in Task II you will have to give opinions or make recommendations about a topic.

**E** The listening test has four parts, and takes around thirty minutes. This is the only section of the test in which you are given time to transfer the answers from your question paper to the answer sheet. The format of each part of the listening is different, becoming more difficult as the test progresses. There are a variety of question types, most of which are the same as the reading. Perhaps the most important fact about the listening test is that, apart from the

example you are given at the beginning of each part of the test, you will only hear the tape once.

**F** Finally comes the speaking. There are three parts to the speaking test. In phase one, the examiner will ask a number of questions about you, your family your plans or your background. In phase two, the long turn, you are given a card and have one minute to prepare a talk of up to two minutes. This leads to phase three, where the examiner will ask you extension questions based on what you have said in phase two. In total, the test takes up to 15 minutes. Testing centres differ in when the listening test is held. Sometimes it is before other sections of the test and sometimes a few days or even a week later.

Questions:

REMINDER: the questions used in this opening section are to demonstrate the types of question used in the IELTS reading test – they are MUCH EASIER than you could expect in the IELTS test. All other questions and texts in this book are the same level of difficulty as the official IELTS test.

### **Question type #1 – Headings Style questions**

The 5 questions below are ‘headings’ style questions. These are one of the two hardest question types in IELTS (True / False / Not given is the other most difficult question type). With headings questions, you need to match one of the headings to the information contained in each paragraph. Here’s a tip – often an example is given which you should cross off the list of headings as every answer is used once only.

Questions 1 – 5. Choose the most suitable headings for sections A – F from the list below.

- i. A global test

- ii. Listening
- iii. Speaking
- iv. Writing
- v. Reading
- vi. The two formats

1. Paragraph A

2. Paragraph B

EXAMPLE: Paragraph C **V**

3. Paragraph D

4. Paragraph E

5. Paragraph F

### **Question type #2 – Short answer questions**

The 2 questions below are 'Short answer' style questions. To complete these questions, you need to write an answer in one, two or three words and / or a number. Here's a tip – writing more than the limit stated in the question will mean your answer will be marked as incorrect.

Questions 6 -7. Answer the following questions. Write ***NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS*** for each answer.

6. What is UCLES responsible for?

7. Which format of the test do a majority of candidates sit?

### **Question type #3 – True / False / Not Given questions**

The question below is a 'True / False / Not Given' style questions. To complete these questions, you need to decide whether a given statement is True, False or Not Given according to the text. Here's a tip – sometimes this type of question requires you to write 'Yes / No / Not Given' instead of 'True / False / Not Given' – it's important to write the correct words.

Question 8. Look at the following statement and decide if it is right or wrong according to the information given.

Write:

**TRUE** if the statement is true

**FALSE** if the statement is false

**NOT GIVEN** if the information is not given in the passage

8. New Zealand accounts for the highest number of candidates sitting the test for further education.

**Question type #4 – Sentence / Summary completion questions**

The questions below are 'Sentence / Summary completion' style questions. To complete these questions, you need to complete a sentence or summary. Here's a tip – the words you need to use to complete these question types are either in the text or given in a box above the questions themselves.

Questions 9 – 11. Complete the summary below. Use **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** from the reading passage for each answer.

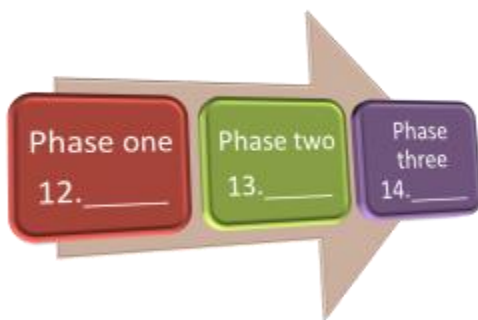


There are three passages in the IELTS General Training reading test. The level becomes increasingly hard, but does not require any \_\_\_\_\_9\_\_\_\_\_. There are 40 questions which have to be written in the \_\_\_\_\_10\_\_\_\_\_. You are not given any \_\_\_\_\_11\_\_\_\_\_ time.

### Question type #5 – Labelling a diagram or flowchart

The questions below are ‘labelling’ style questions. To complete these questions, you need to label a diagram. Here’s a tip – look closely at the other labels already given in the diagram to give you an idea of where to look in the text for the answers you need.

Question 12-14. Label the diagram below. Choose your labels from the list below. Use each label once only. Write A, B or C in your answer sheet.



- A. Personal details/background
- B. Extension questions
- C. Topic card

12. ....

13. ....

14. ....

**Question type #6 and #7 – Matching and classifying**

NOTE: The questions below are classifying questions, but matching questions are very similar.

To complete these questions, you need to match or classify statements to questions.

Questions 15-17. Classifying the following statements as relating to which specific part of the IELTS test? Write:

- R if the statement is about the reading test
- S if the statement is about the speaking test
- W if the statement is about the writing test
- L if the statement is about the listening test

15. You are given a topic card.

16. There are two parts to the test.

17. You are given time to transfer the answers.

Question type #8 – Multiple choice

The question below is a 'multiple choice' style question. To complete this type of question, you need to select the correct answer from either three or four options. Here's a tip – often the list of possible answers are very similar, so you need to identify the *differences*.

Question 18. Choose the appropriate letter A-D.

18. The speaking test

- A may be before other sections of the test.
- B will require you to talk about your hometown.
- C will take at least 15 minutes.
- D is different in every testing centre.

Answers:

- |                                 |                    |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. I                            | 10. ANSWER BOOKLET |
| 2. VI                           | 11. ADDITIONAL     |
| 3. IV                           | 12. A              |
| 4. II                           | 13. C              |
| 5. III                          | 14. B              |
| 6. PRODUCING THE TESTS          | 15. S              |
| 7. (THE) ACADEMIC (MODULE/TEST) | 16. W              |
| 8. FALSE                        | 17. L              |
| 9. SPECIALIST KNOWLEDGE         | 18. A              |

## Classifying questions in IELTS reading

Classifying questions are similar to matching questions – the questions are in statement format, and you need to decide which of a limited number of options each statement relates to.

Here's a very simple example:

Classify the following statement as relating to:

- A. the UK
- B. the USA
- C. Asia.

Write the correct letter A-C in the box provided.

**Question:** Attitudes to the elderly are more traditional

**Text:** In Britain it has now become common for children to place their elderly relative in care homes, much the same as it is in the USA. In Asia, on the other hand, children are more likely to take the older member into their home to be cared for, as has been done for many generations.

**Answer:** C

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### Useful pointers about classification questions:

1. You will be given letters (e.g. A-C) that need to be entered as the answer. In the example above, writing 'Asia' would not be correct – you need to write the corresponding letter ('C')
2. The answer often requires you to consider parallel expression or synonyms. In the example above, 'traditional' in the question has been phrased as 'as has been done for many generations' in the text
3. The answers will NOT necessarily appear in the order of the text.

4. You may need to classify people's opinions, companies, products, countries or any number of options. However, there are very rarely more than five main classifications given.
5. Not all of the classifications will definitely be used – some options may not apply to any question.
6. You will need to carefully note the use of reference words, as the answer may be found by referring back to an earlier part of the text (e.g. 'He states that...(the answer)' – now you have to backtrack through the text to find which 'he' is being referred to.

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## Now practice with classifying questions with a full length example

Read the text then classify the statements that follow.

### ***National airlines***

A national airline is not simply the means by which visitors can travel to a given country, it is often perceived as the flagship of that country. Visitors' perceptions of an airline and the image it creates reflect upon the image and perceptions of the country itself, and it is in realisation of this that governments often subsidise the airline heavily to help ensure it is considered one of the world's finest.



In Australia, Qantas has produced images attractive to both Australians and international travellers. A notable Qantas advertising campaign, 'I still call Australia home' was successful both domestically and internationally. No doubt Qantas officials and the Australian government were pleased with the image boost given to the airline when Dustin Hoffman, in the blockbuster movie Rain Man reminded the world of the enviable crash record of the company.

It was indeed true that Qantas had never lost an aircraft until an incident in Bangkok in 1999, particularly impressive given that it had been operating for over three-quarters of a century without any such incident. The company began life as the 'Queensland and Northern Territory Aerial Services Limited' on 16th November, 1920. The initials soon became a well-known word as Qantas, pronounced 'kwontus', went from strength to strength. Following the collapse of Ansett airlines in September 2001, the airline operated what was essentially a monopoly on its domestic routes, until the arrival of Virgin Blue, a UK-based company that began offering cut-price alternatives. Offshore, Qantas continues to operate successfully. It is the second-largest airline operating out of Singapore Airport and has also expanded into the domestic New Zealand market. While Qantas shares have been bought by other airlines, primarily British Airways, the company remains 51% Australian owned.

The achievements of New Zealand's main airline are no less impressive. Air New Zealand began life in April 1940 with the incorporation of Tasman Empire Airways Limited (TEAL), although it was not known by its modern name until 25 years later. At the time of its inception, TEAL was jointly owned by the governments of New Zealand and Australia, and it was not until April 1961 that full ownership was assumed by New Zealand. The company operated trans-Tasman services and routes to Asia, the USA, the UK and Europe. As TEAL became Air New Zealand, they continued to operate international flights while domestic routes were served by the New Zealand National Airways Corporation (NAC) until 1978, when the two companies merged. Privatisation occurred in April 1989, when the company was sold for NZ\$660 million. Since March 1999, Air New Zealand has been a member of the Star Alliance Group, which includes Air Canada, Singapore Airlines and United Airlines. It is the largest global alliance in the world, and offers significant loyalty rewards to repeat clientele.

In many ways, British Airways could be considered a relatively new entrant to the field. The contemporary British Airways was established in April 1972 as a result of a government-orchestrated merger of BOAC and BEAC, both former state airlines. The beginnings of international commercial aviation in the UK were heavily focused on long-haul routes to former British Empire destinations including Australasia and the Far East. However, back in 1935 a

small, independent airline, also known as British Airways (which would later become part of BOAC before re-emerging under its own name) specialised in flights to and from mainland Europe. The 1990s was a period of rapid global expansion for British Airways. Activities included the establishment of the German carrier Deutsche BA and purchase of shares both in Qantas and US Airways. The star of the British Airways fleet was the Concorde, built and operated in conjunction with Air France from 1975. The Air France Concorde crash in Paris in 2000 contributed to the downfall of the aircraft, which is no longer in operation.

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Classify the following statements as referring to:

- A** QANTAS (QAS)
- B** Air New Zealand (ANZ)
- C** British Airways (BA)

Write the correct letter **A-C** in boxes 1-10 below.

1. This airline is one of the largest airlines operating out of Singapore.
2. This airline owns shares in Australian and American airlines.
3. This airline has the youngest origins of the three.
4. This airline had a joint venture with a French airline.
5. This airline is better known under its acronym.
6. This airline is a member of an international group.
7. This airline is the only one of the three that was not the result of a merger.
8. This airline was sold to investors by the government
9. This airline was promoted by a Hollywood film.

10. This airline has other interests in Europe.

**Answers:**

1. A (QANTAS) – ‘Offshore, Qantas continues to operate successfully. It is the second-largest airline operating out of Singapore Airport’. The question referred to ‘one of the largest’, so ‘second-largest’ has the same meaning.
2. C (British Airways) – ‘The 1990s was a period of rapid global expansion for British Airways... purchase of shares both in Qantas and US Airways.’
3. B (Air New Zealand) – This is a tricky question, as ‘youngest’ refers to the most recent or newest of the three companies – the text states that BA is ‘a relatively new entrant to the field’, but looking at the dates shows a slightly different answer. ‘Air New Zealand began life in April 1940’, QANTAS started on 16th November, 1920 and British Airways has its roots ‘back in 1935’. 1940 is the newest, hence the answer is ‘C’.
4. C (British Airways) ‘The star of the British Airways fleet was the Concorde, built and operated in conjunction with Air France from 1975.’
5. A (QANTAS) – ‘The initials soon became a well-known word as Qantas, pronounced ‘kwontus’ (an acronym is a word made up from the initials of the complete title, such as NASA)
6. B (Air New Zealand) – ‘Since March 1999, Air New Zealand has been a member of the Star Alliance Group, which includes Air Canada, Singapore Airlines and United Airlines.’
7. A (QANTAS) – ‘Air New Zealand...continued to operate international flights while domestic routes were served by the New Zealand National Airways Corporation (NAC) until 1978, when the two companies merged’ AND ‘The contemporary British Airways was established in April 1972 as a result of a government-orchestrated merger of BOAC and BEAC’
8. B (Air New Zealand) – ‘Privatisation occurred in April 1989, when the company was sold for NZ\$660 million.’



9. A (QANTAS) – ‘Dustin Hoffman, in the blockbuster movie Rain Man reminded the world of the enviable crash record of the company.’
10. C (British Airways) – ‘Activities included the establishment of the German carrier Deutsche BA’

### **Now practice classifying questions again with another full length example**

Read the text below and answer the classifying questions that follow. Keep an eye on your time!

Speed levels:

- 25 minutes or more = TOO SLOW!
- 18 minutes = not bad
- 12 minutes = good
- 5 to 12 minutes = very good
- less than 5 minutes = AMAZING!

### **QUANTUM NEUROLOGY**

Despite the great strides made in understanding and promoting health, especially in recent decades, there are still a large number of areas for which definitive research is still thin on the ground. Crystal healing, the power of suggestion and positive thinking, even acupuncture, are still not fully understood and there is a strong element of doubt, notably in western attitudes, that these



‘alternative’ options for maintaining or recovering health have any discernible value. However,

there are an increasing number of people, dissatisfied with the pharmaceutical approach, who are looking elsewhere to find solutions to ailments.

Although still relatively unknown in many countries, one area that is receiving an increasing amount of attention, both positive and negative, is Quantum Neurology, a technique which redressing imbalances in the nervous system to encourage or allow the body to recognize damaged or weakened areas and act accordingly to strengthen or repair them. This is accomplished with a specific series of upper and lower body muscle strength tests designed to evaluate the entire system, as well as strengthening the nerves with light therapy, and gentle joint movements.

Having strong links to osteopathy, with its holistic approach to treatment, quantum neurology aims to relink the complete nervous system as a whole, and is reported to have had significance success in a wide range of cases. The founder and developer of the system credits the work he was able to perform on his wife following a moderate spinal cord injury and recovery. A lack of realistic treatment options or even a firm diagnosis of cause led Dr Smith, who was already studying to become an osteopath, to investigate the healing power within the nervous system. He was later noted as stating that 'It was exhilarating to see immediate healing express itself. With well-focused corrections, damaged nerve function was restored. Nothing was added to the body and nothing was removed, simply the stimulation of the Nervous System in very specific ways to elicit the lost function to return.'

Smith has also identified a definition of the nervous system as it relates to quantum neurology. Not only does it refer to the physical body (muscles, bones, and general mechanics), but also what is classed as the non-physical body – that aspect which many people have previously known as an aura or spirit. His work over recent years has been to build a map of the nervous system, both physical and non-physical, in order to explore the functions and healing pathways, much like 'the electrician commands the flow of electricity of a home through the breaker box and wires.'

According to Smith, for quantum neurology to take effect, a series of very precise manipulations in a clear sequence are required. The specific pattern will vary not only from person to person, but also depend very much on what weaknesses are identified and targeted. However, it is this irregular approach that has caused many to doubt the true effectiveness of the principle. Marek Szczepanski, a researcher from the Institute of Applied Medicines in Poland, has argued that unless a clear, unified approach is applied that can be tested and verified, then there is no clear way to quantifiably prove the effectiveness of quantum neurology.

Other medical debate has focused on the actual tools quantum neurology relies on to rebuild the nervous system. The principle is that it is breakdowns in communication within the nervous system that causes the problem, so tools are needed which can encourage or stimulate this communication, the most common tool being light therapy. Those promoting quantum neurology claim that a direct beam from a visible red laser, aimed directly at the brain stem, can 'light up' the entire nervous system, allowing the body to identify weakened or damaged areas of the system and act accordingly to repair them. This has led to others in the medical profession to argue that quantum neurology is not a reliable approach as the benefits of visible red lasers is unproven and unfounded.

Dr J F Penrey has also criticized quantum neurology on the basis not only of what he deems 'anecdotal case studies' rather than direct scientific research, going as far as to say that 'even the name quantum neurology is a marketing term meant to give the false impression of cutting edge science'.

Dr Kate Barrow follows a more neutral line – comfortable with the concept of the nervous system being able to repair itself to a degree given the right encouragement, she argues that in many, non-severe cases, positive results are largely what is known in scientific circles as *dowsing*. That is, the results are affected by what the patient wants to happen, rather than what was actually cured or repaired. However, Matteus Enroub, a proponent of quantum neurology, points out that if this was the case, then surrogate testing (where another person is used as the 'medium' between the patient and the practitioner) would not be effective. Using another person to test reactions to certain stimuli, where areas of weakness are passed

through to the surrogate who had not previously been informed of these specific areas, illustrates that this cannot be a purely psychological phenomenon.

Regardless of personal opinions, it is clear that Quantum Neurology is a branch of healing that requires – and deserves – further study.

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Classify the following statements as referring to:

1. Dr Smith
2. Marek Szczepanski
3. Dr J F Penrey
4. Dr Kate Barrow
5. Matteus Enroub

Write the correct letter **A-E** in boxes 1-10 below.

1. Became involved in Quantum Neurology for personal reasons
2. Believes that a consistent, uniform application is required in order to evaluate Quantum Neurology
3. Argues that even the language used is misleading
4. Suggests that in milder cases, there could be a psychological factor that promotes healing rather than strict science
5. Tests involving people with no prior knowledge of afflictions means that the effect must be more than psychological

**Answers:**

1. A – ‘work he was able to perform on his wife following a moderate spinal cord injury and recovery’
2. B – ‘unless a clear, unified approach is applied that can be tested and verified, then there is no clear way to quantifiably prove the effectiveness of quantum neurology’

3. C – ‘even the name quantum neurology is a marketing term meant to give the false impression of cutting edge science’
4. D – ‘the results are affected by what the patient wants to happen, rather than what was actually cured or repaired’
5. E – the text explains that surrogate testing, using a third person, can reveal weaknesses the surrogate was not even informed of.

**Learn as you study! Here’s some vocabulary from the previous reading text:**

thin on the ground = not much of something, rare or limited

discernible = something that can be seen or determined

ailments = another word for sicknesses, aches or pains

redressing = to fix, remedy, put right

holistic = considering the body as a whole, not as individual parts

exhilarating = feel very happy or excited

elicit = to draw out, encourage a response

verified = proven, shown to be accurate or true

anecdotal = based on personal experience not research; not necessarily true

a proponent = someone who supports something

practitioner = someone engaged in an art or profession (commonly medical)

Now practice by using the vocabulary above in a complete sentence. Complete the sentences below using one of the words in the list above. Use each word **ONCE ONLY**.

1. This government is a strong ..... of encouraging people to train.
2. The government should be doing more to ..... the difference in wealth between rich and poor.
3. There is a common belief that chocolate can cause spots, but this is purely ..... – there is no scientific proof to support it.
4. Western medicine is often targeted at specific problems, and this can lead to more side effects than ..... alternatives.
5. The police interviewed the suspect, hoping to ..... a confession.
6. The number of pandas are becoming increasingly..... .
7. He has been studying very hard and I'm happy to say there has been a ..... improvement in his test results.
8. Many older people find their health declining as they suffer from an increasing number of.
9. When calling the bank, you need to know the password so your identity can be .....  
. Show answer
10. If you feel you may have caught the 'flu, contact your nearest medical .....
11. I love sky diving – it's such an ..... experience!

Answers:

- |                       |                  |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| 1. Proponent          | 7. discernible   |
| 2. redressing         | 8. ailments      |
| 3. anecdotal          | 9. verified      |
| 4. holistic           | 10. practitioner |
| 5. elicit             | 11. exhilarating |
| 6. thin on the ground |                  |

---

## Headings questions in IELTS reading

One of the most common – and most difficult – types of question you are likely to face in the IELTS reading test are Headings style questions, where you are required to match a heading (much the same as a title) to a paragraph from the text.

Here are some facts about Headings questions in IELTS:

- There are always more headings than paragraphs.
- There can be up to ten paragraphs in an IELTS reading text
- Some of the headings are similar
- Matching words and phrases directly from the heading and the text is not a good technique – you need to focus on parallel expressions (that is, the same meaning written in a different way with different vocabulary)
- The same heading is never used more than once.
- You need to write the Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, iv, v etc) not the heading itself
- You are often given an example, but this is not necessarily the first paragraph

For many IELTS candidates, Headings style questions and True, False, Not Given style questions are the most difficult question types, so if you're having difficulty, you're not alone!

Here's an example of a headings style question.

Which of the three headings given do you think matches best (the answer is below the text)?

- a Disappointment in GM foods.
- b GM foods could be the answer.
- c The history of GM foods.



*When the idea was first put forward, the concept of genetically modified (GM) food seemed to be the answer to so many problems. The ability to harvest foods that could grow in specific climates and were resistant to disease would end famine in many countries, saving millions, even making fortunes for farmers. The truth, however, is a little different. Lower yields, expensive research and general public distrust of 'tampered' food have not made genetic modification the solution it promised to be.*

Click here to see the answer and explanation

The correct answer is A. Although the paragraph does refer to some positive things, these were only the hopes for GM food, not what actually happened.

B is not correct – although the text does talk about some of the hopes for GM food, the end of paragraph shows that these hopes did not come true. The text is written in the past tense, but the heading would be looking for the present or future tense ('Could be' is referring to the future).

C is not the correct answer because the text is written in the past tense, but it is about what people hoped or expected would happen. The last sentence of the paragraph refers to the current situation, not the history.

### **Here are some useful tips to help answer Headings questions in IELTS:**

1. Read the first and last part of the paragraph carefully.



2. Underline key words, phrases or sentences.
3. Pick more than one heading for each passage if you are not sure. When you have completed this for all paragraphs, you can see if any have been used twice.
4. Make sure the meaning of the complete heading matches, not just single words.
5. Look for what is different between each paragraph, not what is the same.
6. If an example is given, cross it off the list of headings.

Now practice with a complete text.

### **The GM controversy – is it worth it?**

**A** Four genetically modified foods are currently being tested in the UK in the hope that they will be resistant to the most common herbicides. The aim is to create a crop which can be sprayed to kill everything around it, allowing more room and an easier harvest. Yet the project has been under heavy pressure, as it promotes the use of broad spectrum herbicides which have already been linked with the decline in farmland wildlife, a result of its highly efficient removal of weeds and a consequent decrease in food supplies for invertebrates and birds.

**B** In order to pacify the environmentalists, the experiment into herbicidal side effects will be run on four fields, all divided into two – one half growing the GM crop and the other half growing a non-GM variety – with numbers of insects, wild flowers and birds being compared in each half of the field. However, the GM crop will be grown for only one year and each trial field will be monitored for only a further two years. Farmland ecology is poorly understood and the wildlife in these fields will never have been studied before. Soil type is an important factor in determining what lives in the field, yet it may vary from one part of the field to another. Modern fields are often two or three older fields joined together, each of which may have a different history, soil structure and wildlife. Insect numbers vary naturally from one year to the next, so effects would have to be large, otherwise they would not be detected. Earthworms, fungi and bacteria are vital to the health of the soil, yet their numbers are not being monitored.

**C** Naturally, those who are opposed to the experiment claim that the effects of GM crops and their herbicides are likely to be subtle. It took many years for the devastating effects of DDT on birds to be realised and over 50 years for scientists to discover the damage caused to the ozone layer by CFCs, previously thought to be inert. Three years of limited studies is simply not long enough to say that GM crops are 'safe'. DNA from GM crops may spread into the wider environment through the transfer of genetic material to soil microbes. DNA from GM sugar beet persists for up to two years in the soil. In laboratory experiments DNA from GM plants was taken up by both fungi and bacteria. Agricultural soils are often very mobile, so it is likely that soil contaminated by GM crops will spread to other fields. In addition, sugar beet seeds can remain in the ground, dormant but fertile, for at least 10 years, giving rise to GM sugar beet plants long after monitoring of the fields has stopped.

**D** GM contamination will affect livelihoods of other farmers, especially organic farmers, who will be unable to sell contaminated crops. Honey contaminated with GM pollen from last year's crop trials has already been found. Beekeepers provide a vital service to fruit growers but will be forced to move their hives from areas near GM crop trials if they wish to avoid GM contamination, and this will affect land values.

**E** But perhaps the most persuasive reason to abandon GM food is that nature is already evolving beyond our advances in the field. GM insect-resistant crops are starting to become less effective, as the insect pests they were designed to resist rapidly develop tolerance. Similarly, weeds will develop herbicide tolerance as they are exposed to more of the same few herbicides, and as nature adapts to the new environment, another weakness of GM foods is exposed – it cannot change. By being manipulated and modified, GM crops have lost their ability to adapt as natural crops would, and are unable to cope with the environmental changes the planet is experiencing.

Questions 1-5. Match the headings below with a paragraph from the text above. Write i – viii in the boxes provided.

### **List of headings**

- I. **Looking at the long term**
- II. **The weaknesses of upcoming tests**
- III. **Benefits to farming**
- IV. **Subsidiary effects**
- V. **Controversial experiments for easier farming**
- VI. **GM food remains highly adaptable**
- VII. **The flexibility of nature**
- VIII. **The science of genetic modification**

1. Paragraph A:

2. Paragraph B:

3. Paragraph C:

4. Paragraph D:

5. Paragraph E:

Answers:

1. V
2. II
3. I
4. IV
5. VII

Headings practice text 2

Read the following passage and select the best heading for each paragraph.

**A.** Lapped on all sides by water, it's hardly surprising that the country's largest city is a giant aquatic playpen, with its two harbours, a gulf full of islands, a rugged coast and the highest density per head of pleasure boats in the world. By ferry, boat or water taxi, some 48 islands make for a perfect cruise. Some offer homes for commuters and weekend retreaters. Others are only for native birds, flora and fauna, or for lifestylers seeking a bygone era. Then there is the volcano island of Rangitoto, with a cone so perfectly round it looks the same wherever you are.



**B.** Waiheke, a short ferry ride from Auckland, is a popular choice for those who prefer island living. Auckland's long and sunny, sometimes humid, but mostly balmy days are at their summer best between January and April. This time of year brings Auckland dwellers outdoors to savour this lifestyle built on a nautical backdrop but underlined by artistic and sporting endeavours. The city is home to well over a million, including the world's largest Polynesian population and an increasing swell of Asians. It is a colourful tapestry of culture, cuisine and a sophisticated manner befitting a grown-up metropolis. A free evening concert of fireworks and orchestra is an annual event in the Auckland Domain, below the majestic Auckland Museum. It draws a sea of picnickers, complete with chilly bins full of food and fine local wine. In winter, brisk weather is no deterrent to the thousands who swamp Eden Park to watch an invigorating game of rugby. No matter what time of year, Auckland always has an event or festival to celebrate.

**C.** Little wonder that more and more well-heeled and sometimes very famous folk fall for the city's charm. They glide in on floating palaces, treating Auckland as a newfound southern Riviera. That they should have discovered the city and its pleasures is largely due to Team New Zealand bringing two defences of the prestigious international America's Cup yacht race to the Hauraki Gulf. The Cup defence sparked a citywide spruce-up and the creation of a swank new Viaduct Harbour village, teeming with classy restaurants, boutiques, bars, hotels and

apartments. Suburbs of Auckland are never far from beaches as golden sand and bath-like waters in the sheltered harbourside draw the barbecue brigade and families.

**D.** The North Shore, the community north of the Harbour Bridge, is well worth exploring. Ferries ply the harbour between downtown Auckland and Devonport, a sweet village that offers main street browsing and al fresco cafe lattes in the sun. Mt Victoria and North Head, with their war remnant defence bunkers, rise up behind the village. They're perfect places for children to scramble and explore. Picturesque swimming beaches hug the shores that stretch to the north-east below.

**E.** The needle-shaped Sky Tower rises from the bustling commercial centre. The tower houses a casino, and madcap sky jumpers plunge over its side past diners eating in the revolving restaurant. Far below, motorways slither under and over each other in such a sprawl that one section is simply known as "spaghetti junction". From the gourmet and trendy shopping strip of Ponsonby on the city fringe, to fashion-conscious Newmarket, upmarket Parnell and Remuera, from smart suburban malls to the Pacific Island markets in colourful Otara to the south, the sprawling city is an ever-changing mosaic.

**F.** It is a place where, half an hour from the centre, you can fish for snapper, tramp in a national park, or play golf on some of the most picturesque and challenging courses in the world. Its backyard brims with treats. There's a beautiful garden smothered in scented roses. Another is planted by scent for the blind. You can drive up a volcano called One Tree Hill, fill up on culture and history at galleries and museums or land yourself in a virtual Antarctic at Kelly Tarlton's Antarctic Encounter and Underwater World. But for a relaxing reward, nothing beats the lolling landscape carpeted in vineyards on the city's outskirts, where a taste or three of some of the country's premier wines is a pleasant way to end the day.

- i. Messing about on the water
- ii. Getting out of Auckland
- iii. A bird's-eye view
- iv. Overwhelming choices

- v. City lights
- vi. Harbourside development
- vii. Something for every season
- viii. Over the Bridge
- ix. Bird spotting

- 1. Paragraph A .....
- 2. Paragraph B .....
- 3. Paragraph C .....
- 4. Paragraph D .....
- 5. Paragraph E .....
- 6. Paragraph F.....

Answers:

- 1. I
- 2. VII
- 3. VI
- 4. VIII
- 5. V
- 6. IV

Now practice with headings questions and other question types in this complete text.

### **A brief history of the Olympics**

Most people have heard of the Olympics, a sporting event held every four years, where people from around the world congregate in one place to compete in various sporting events. But how much is known of its history?

**A** The Olympics first began in Ancient Greece nearly 2700 years ago as a religious occasion, very different from the secular(2) event we see now. It was primarily a festival celebrating the ancient Greek gods. Named after the goddess Olympia, the festival was actually in praise of the god Zeus and was held in a specially constructed stadium called The Hippodrome. Unlike the modern Olympics, there were very few events, the most popular being running, fighting and javelin throwing(3).



**B** For the athletes, the honour of winning was the reason for participation, not only for themselves, but also for their city, as the winner of each competition was given prizes to bestow(4) on the citizens of his hometown. Prizes were often food – grain and meat – but occasionally also precious metals. Naturally, this engendered(5) a degree of rivalry amongst competitors and cities, but one of the most notable aspects of the Olympics was that, for the duration of the festival, there was peace, at least outside the arena(6). By government decree, there were no arguments or hostilities, convicted criminals were to be treated well and the death penalty was not carried out. All wars – domestic and international – had to be suspended. Nothing of importance was discussed as the games became the paramount(7) focus of the nation.

**C** Despite the prizes, the honours and the enforcement of peace, the Games were not entirely philanthropic(8) in nature. In accordance with the customs of the time, they still carried the traditional exclusion of women and slaves, who were not allowed within the stadium. Transgression of this rule resulted in severe punishment. It was not until 1900 that women were finally allowed to compete.

**D** Nonetheless, for nearly 700 years, the Olympics represented something noble in that it promoted, albeit for only five days, a period of peace around which the whole country could gather. It was somewhat ironic(9), then, that the original Games were abolished after the Roman invasion in AD356, and for a period of just over a millennium(10) and a half, there were no more Olympics.

**E** It was in 1896 that Baron Pierre de Coubertin, a Frenchman, and Dimitrios Vikelas, a Greek, revived the games. Fittingly(11), the first of the modern Olympics was held in Greece, but although the intentions of the Games were good, they no longer represented the original ideals of the Olympics. World War I caused one game to be cancelled and World War II caused the cancellation of another two – a far cry from the period of peace the games first inspired. To try and revive the spirit of peace and understanding that the original games represented, Baron de Coubertin designed an Olympic flag with five intertwining rings which symbolised the union of the five continents. This was first used at the Antwerp Olympics in 1920 together with the release of doves at the beginning of the Games as a symbol of peace. However, athletes competing to be the best in the world, financial rewards in the form of sponsorship, financial problems and allegations of drug abuse have further tarnished(12) what was once the embodiment of a desire to bring people together harmoniously.

**F** However, there is still much to admire in the Olympics of today. It has become an opportunity for people of nearly 200 nationalities to come together in the spirit of friendly competition, much as they did nearly 3000 years ago. Now the rewards come in the form of medals and the knowledge that the athlete is one of the best in the world. The importance of the games has been reinforced with the introduction of the Winter Olympics and the Paralympics Games, the latter of which is specifically for people with physical disabilities. It can now be said that the Olympic Games is truly a competition for all people.

From the list of headings choose the most suitable for each paragraph.

List of headings

- I. Re-emergence of the Games



- II. Traditional discrimination
- III. The way to peace
- IV. Origins
- V. The contemporary Olympiad
- VI. Worldwide recognition
- VII. Dissolution through conquest
- VIII. A feeling of animosity
- IX. Harmony through competition

1. Paragraph A
2. Paragraph B
3. Paragraph C
4. Paragraph D
5. Paragraph E
6. Paragraph F

### Questions 7 TO 12

Using ***NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER***, answer the following questions.

7. How many times has war cancelled the modern Olympics?
8. What caused the Olympics to stop in 356AD?
9. To whom were the original Olympics dedicated?
10. Were the original Olympics entirely a time of goodwill?
11. Before AD356, how long was each Olympics?
12. How many countries are represented in the modern Olympics?

**Answers:**

1. **IV**
  2. **IX**
  3. **II**
  4. **VII**
  5. **I**
  6. **V**
  7. **3 / three (paragraph E)**
  8. **(the) Romans invasion (paragraph D)**
  9. **(the) (god) Zeus (paragraph A)**
  10. **No (paragraph C)**
  11. **5/five days (paragraph D)**
  12. **Nearly 200/two hundred (paragraph F) NOTE: Your answer must include 'nearly' to be considered correct**
- 

## IELTS reading parallel expressions

One of the skills that you will be tested on in the IELTS test is the ability to identify parallel expressions – that is, two sentences that have the same meaning but are written using a different structure, vocabulary or grammar.

It involves transforming vocabulary into words or phrases which have the same or similar meaning as the original.

This can be done in two ways:

By different word families:

Our cities are becoming increasingly ***polluted***.

***Pollution*** is increasing in our cities.

Or with different vocabulary:

Yet the reality is nowhere near as appealing.

The truth, however, is far less attractive.

Practice with parallel expressions

Read the text below and answer the questions.

***There is a dark corporate conspiracy at work in the petroleum industry. On television and in the media we are constantly bombarded with images of green trees, promised a fuel that is '97% cleaner than ever before' and told we are heading towards 'a healthier future'. Yet the reality is nowhere near as appealing. Our cities are becoming increasingly polluted as the number of cars continues to rise and petrol emissions show no sign of easing. Much like car manufacturers who market their products under the image of freedom and independence, we are being sold a fantasy which simply does not hold true.***

Answer the following questions using ***NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS FROM THE TEXT***

1. Who is responsible for the shadowy scheme of selling dreams, not the truth? Show answer **The petroleum industry. Consider how the language has changed – 'dark > 'shadowy'. 'sold a fantasy' > 'selling dreams', 'does not hold true' > 'not the truth'**

2. Who sells their product as a symbol of independence?

Show answer **Car manufacturers. This is a little easier as the question uses the word family of one of the words in the question (independent). However, 'symbol' has changed to 'image of'.**

3. What images are we constantly bombarded with?

Show answer **Green trees. This should be the easiest of the three answers as you can match complete phrases in the text.**

---

In the IELTS reading test, there are three ways you can find answers to questions:

1. matching exact phrases in the text	Question: What images are we <u>constantly bombarded with</u> ? Text: <b><i>we are <u>constantly bombarded with images of</u> ...</i></b>
2. scanning for matching words	Question: Who sells their <u>product</u> as a symbol of <u>independence</u> ? Text: <b><i>car manufacturers who market their <u>products</u> under the image of freedom and <u>independence</u></i></b>
3. looking for parallel expressions	Question: Who is responsible for the shadowy scheme of selling dreams, not the truth? Text: <b><i>a dark corporate conspiracy at work ...we are being sold a fantasy which simply does not hold true</i></b>

As with any useful tip or hint, you need to practice by applying these techniques to an authentic IELTS reading test – take a look at our complete practice tests to try out your new skills.

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## IELTS reading practice (single text)

### Matching questions in IELTS reading

In the IELTS reading test, matching questions come in 3 different forms. You could be asked to match a heading to a paragraph (this is covered in the Headings lesson), match two halves of a sentences or match cause and effect. This post will focus on matching sentence halves and cause and effect statements.



*NOTE: This post does not cover **classifying**, which is a slightly different skill and will be covered in future posts.*

#### Matching parts of sentences

Here's an example of a matching exercises that requires you to match parts of a sentence.

1	This exercise is	A. a common 'matching' question type.
2	Putting sentence halves together is	B. a simple example of this question type.

The correct combination is:

1 – B

2 – A

**Useful tip:** When matching sentence halves, grammar and logic are important. If you are having difficulty finding the correct answer, begin by eliminating the options you think are wrong.

Practice by matching the sentence halves below. *There is no text for this exercise – use the tip above to find the correct answers.*

<b>1</b> Further education is essential if ...	<b>a</b> ... you are hoping for a good job.
<b>2</b> Degree-level study and beyond ...	<b>b</b> ... is part of building your English.
<b>3</b> Good teachers ...	<b>c</b> ... is a very useful tool in the job market.
<b>4</b> The ability to speak English ...	<b>d</b> ... should be self-funded.
<b>5</b> Completing homework assignments ...	<b>e</b> ... have good students.

Answers:

1=A, 2=D, 3=E, 4=C, 5=B

### Matching cause and effect

Here's a simple example of a cause and effect matching question:

<b>1</b> University enrolment has increased	<b>a</b> Specialised courses developed to train people.
<b>2</b> Technology is increasing in the workplace	<b>b</b> More competition for places.

The correct combination is:

1 – B

2 – A

**Useful tip:** Matching cause-and-effect sentences can be difficult as they often rely on reference words, they will not always be in the same sentence with a clear connecting word and there are many ways of expressing cause and effect (see here for a closer look at cause and effect constructions). When matching cause-and-effect questions, you will often find that the linking words and the grammar have been abbreviated, leaving almost note-form sentences. It often helps to build each cause or effect phrase into a complete sentence after you have matched them. For example:

Question: University enrolment has increased = more competition for places

*Complete sentence: As a result of increased enrolment in university, there is now more competition for places.*

## **Practice!**

Practice by reading the text below and matching cause and effect in the table that follows.

*For many sufferers of dyslexia, the knowledge that they have this learning difficulty came too late to help. Having been through, and often dropped out of, the standard school system, they are left with a low sense of self-worth and the conviction that they are mentally below par. Yet in reality, dyslexics often have above-average intelligence. The problem, it appears, is that they have trouble translating language into thought and thought into language. The two-dimensional world of reading and spelling is a constant source of frustration, and those suffering from dyslexia need more time and help in reading and spelling. Undiagnosed, children see a difference between themselves and their peers but don't know how to express it to others and continue quietly struggling to compete in a world for which their mind is not geared. Teachers and even other students push them to simply 'try harder' or 'just concentrate and you'll get it'.*

*Moving from childhood to adolescence, the situation becomes worse. Young teenagers are academically left even further behind, and this is often noticed by fellow students, an embarrassing situation for people already going through hormonal and biological changes. Anxiety and anger build from repeated failures, low school results and an inability to follow the flow of lessons that other students seem to comprehend with relative ease.*

*Motivation then becomes a problem as these young teens are mislabelled 'lazy', or 'emotionally disturbed', and some schools then probe into the home life of a student in order to uncover causes for these problems. This inevitably adds pressure to an already tense situation.*

*Fear of humiliation combined with an unimpressive academic record often combines to discourage students from continuing to university or further education. For those that do pursue an academic path, they often find college just as hard, if not harder. Finding some solace in menial jobs which do not require the academic skills they could never master, many intelligent people with dyslexia never get to explore their true abilities and so are left with low self-esteem that follows them throughout their adult life.*

<b>1</b> Symptoms not recognised in childhood	<b>a</b> Lack of ambition
<b>2</b> Peer pressure	<b>b</b> Feeling of inferiority begins
<b>3</b> Incorrectly diagnosed	<b>c</b> Chronic low self-confidence
<b>4</b> Fear of further humiliation	<b>d</b> Deeper investigation into the wrong areas
<b>5</b> Never realising full potential	<b>e</b> Additional stress at an already difficult age

Answers:

1=B, 2=E, 3=D, 4=A, 5=C



Here are some more examples. Look at the sentences below and see how parallel expressions have been used.

A The environmental impact of the increasing number of cars on the road is devastating.

Could be written as:

**The rise in the volume of cars being used is highly destructive to the environment.**

B Without a convenient and economical public transport system, most people will continue to use their cars to get to work.

Could be written as:

**The majority of commuters will not abandon their own private vehicle until mass transit options become more flexible and better priced.**

C The situation is intensified by the rising number of two-car families.

Could be written as:

**The problem has been heightened by the increasing number of households that own two vehicles.**

D Car-sharing schemes, where people travel together in one vehicle, have not been particularly successful.

Could be written as:

**Reducing the number of single occupant cars have not been a great success.**

E Although contaminants in petrol have been reduced, they still pose a significant threat.

Could be written as:

**Despite now having lower levels of contamination, petrol is still a notable concern.**

F The lack of government legislation to control exhaust fumes, especially from older cars, has exacerbated the problem.

Could be written as:

**The problem has been heightened, to a large extent from older vehicles, because there are insufficient laws to govern this.**

G In addition to environmental damage, increased air pollution has direct health consequences.

Could be written as:

**Airborne pollutants can have a clear impact on health as well as the effect on the environment as a whole.**

H Respiratory diseases have increased, especially within inner-city areas.

Could be written as:

**Those residing in urban areas are increasingly likely to suffer with breathing related conditions.**

I Benzene, a by-product of the combustion of petrol, has been linked to birth defects.

Could be written as:

**Complications arising from birth have been connected to benzene, a specific secondary result of burning gas.**

J Yet while the car retains its image of freedom and individuality, it is unlikely that people will opt to take the bus.

Could be written as:

**Public transport will probably not be used commonly until the use of private vehicles is no longer considered to represent a feeling of being unique and allowing people to travel freely.**

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## Qualifying word in IELTS reading

By now, you should be familiar with the idea of looking for key words in the question before looking for the answer in both the IELTS reading and listening test. However, a common reason for IELTS candidates to lose points is by not looking closely enough at *qualifying words* – words that modify the degree or amount of the main verb or noun.



### Compare these two sentences:

- Every government believes that education is important.
- Most governments believe that education is important.

When you are looking for key words, you should have identified ‘government’, ‘important’ and ‘education’.

However, you should also have identified the qualifying words – in sentence 1, the qualifying word is ‘every’. In sentence 2, this has changed to ‘most’.

### Now look at the TRUE, FALSE or NOT GIVEN question below.

*All governments feel that being educated is significant.*

If you were answering question 1 above (Every government believes that education is important), then the answer would be TRUE. However, if you were answering question 2 (Most governments believe that education is important) then the answer changes to FALSE, because it is not ALL governments, only MOST.

As you can see from the example above, qualifying words are particularly important in TRUE, FALSE NOT GIVEN questions, but they can also be important with other question types.

Here are some more qualifying words that are commonly used in the IELTS test.

- A. virtually nil, an insignificant number, negligible, rarely
- B. a few, a minority, a small number, occasionally
- C. always, everyone, the entirety
- D. all but a few, the majority, most, little doubt
- E. nil, zero, nobody, absolutely none
- F. roughly half, sometimes, neither one way nor the other, no particular emphasis either way

**Now practice by reading the short text below and answer the questions that follow.**

For most people, traditional forms of culture have little impact on their daily lives. Opera, fine art, classical literature – these are special events, not the common fare of the average household. Popular culture, on the other hand, dominates almost all of our leisure time. We are becoming a nation with very short attention spans, spending most evenings in front of the TV, with very few people making the effort of actually entertaining themselves.

**Are the following statements TRUE (T) or FALSE (F)?**

- 1 Traditional culture has no impact on our daily lives.
- 2 Popular culture dominates all our leisure time.
- 3 Only a minority of people make their own entertainment.

Answers:

1. FALSE – the question says ‘no impact’, but the text says ‘little’
2. FALSE – the question says ‘all our leisure time’ but the text says ‘almost all’
3. TRUE – the question says ‘only a minority’, which is equal to ‘very few’

USEFUL TIP: In the *writing* test, using qualifying words to make your opinion less dogmatic (strong, or presented as absolutely 100%) can help improve your result. For example:

People on lower incomes **never** save money. *This is too strong*

People on lower incomes **rarely** save money. *This is more academic as it allows for exceptions.*

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## Reading practice exercise

## Reading practice exercise

Brush up on your reading skills with this short text and questions.

**Note:** The text is NOT full the length of a normal IELTS reading test – this is a shortened version for some quick practice! See if you can complete it under 10 minutes.

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Read the text below and answer the 10 questions that follow:

Gifu castle is one of the most beautiful sight-seeing attractions in central Japan. The closest township is Gifu, which has a population of approximately four hundred thousand people and is the prefectural capital. There are several noteworthy places in the region, including Ozaki castle and Sekigahara, the site of Japan's most famous battle, the Battle of Sekigahara (1603) a monumental victory for Ieyasu Tokugawa, the renowned warlord of Edo, now Japan's capital city, Tokyo.



In order to ascend to Gifu castle, which is perched atop the seventy metre high Mount Kinka, there is a cable car or for the more athletic sight-seer there are many trails to the castle and museum. The shortest of these trails takes around one hour to reach the castle, at a steady pace. Walking the trails is not recommended during the winter months as the tracks can become slippery and dangerous.

The present day castle which was built with concrete and timber in the 1950's, is based upon the 16<sup>th</sup> century building. It was governed and inhabited by the notorious warlord Oda Nobunaga, the most feared of all Japanese warlords who met a treacherous death near the modern day city of Kyoto in 1582, after one of his most trusted generals, Akechi Mitsuhide turned against him. Mitsuhide ordered the buildings of Honno-ji temple be set alight, forcing the great warlord Nobunaga to commit seppuku, the samurai form of suicide.

The castle consists of three levels and contains many displays of weapons, maps, military equipment, portraits of Nobunaga and other artifacts from the period. On the third level, for those without any fear of heights, there is an observation platform from which viewers can look out across the Nagara river valley towards the city of Nagoya.

There is a small cafe and restaurant providing light refreshments near the cable car entrance, a five minute walk from the castle.

### **Comprehension Questions (True or False)**

1/. The present day castle was built in the sixteenth century.

[Click here to show the answer](#)

FALSE

2/. Akechi Mitsuhide governed Gifu castle.

[Click here to show the answer](#)

FALSE

3/. It takes about one hour to reach the castle on foot.

[Click here to show the answer](#)

TRUE

4/. Oda Nobunaga was killed in the Battle of Sekigahara.

[Click here to show the answer](#)

FALSE

5/. The population of Gifu is approximately 400,000 people.

[Click here to show the answer](#)

TRUE

**Comprehension Questions (short answer – use no more than 3 words and/or a number)**

6/. Who betrayed Oda Nobunaga, forcing his death?

[Click here to show the answer](#)

Akechi Mitsuhide

7/. When did Oda Nobunaga die?

[Click here to show the answer](#)

1582

8/. When was the modern day castle built?

[Click here to show the answer](#)

In the 1950's

9/. What is the capital of Gifu prefecture?

[Click here to show the answer](#)

Gifu City

10/. What can visitors see from the third floor beyond the river?

[Click here to show the answer](#)

Nagoya (City)

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## Reference words in IELTS reading

### Reference words in IELTS reading

What's wrong with this sentence?

*Some people believe that a university education should be available to everyone as a university education will help with employment.*

The problem here is that 'university education' has been repeated – the sentence would have been better presented using a reference word like this:

*Some people believe that a university education should be available to everyone as **this** will help with employment.*

Reference words (words that refer back to a previous word or phrase but without repeating it) are very common in IELTS reading, and can often cause some confusion. An important part of understanding a text is being able to identify the reference words and their relationship to other words, phrases or sentences in the passage.

**Test your skills – what do the underlined words refer to? Choose the correct letter A-C.**



New Zealand is becoming an increasingly popular destination for overseas visitors. It attracts tourists and people on business, but the vast majority come as students. Mostly from Asian countries, they stay for anything from a few weeks to a few years or more, studying at language schools, colleges and universities. New Zealand can offer good homestay accommodation, a clean and beautiful environment and a

reasonable cost of tuition. **These factors** attract an ever-increasing number of overseas students, accounting for millions of dollars in revenue for New Zealand.

**It** refers to

- (a) overseas
- (b) New Zealand
- (c) a popular destination

Show answer **(B) – New Zealand**

**They** refers to

- (a) Asian countries
- (b) tourists and business people
- (c) students

Show answer **(C) – students**

**These factors** refers to

- (a) accommodation, environment and reasonable tuition costs
- (b) schools, colleges, universities
- (c) increasing overseas students

Show answer **(A) – accommodation, environment and reasonable tuition costs**

Now try using reference words the other way round. What reference word could replace the underlined words?

1. Professor Edwards has been lecturing for 16 years.
2. Overseas students often find university courses difficult.
3. The IELTS test is becoming increasingly popular.

1. Professor Edwards ...      Show answer **He**
2. Overseas students ...      Show answer **They**
3. The IELTS test ...      Show answer **It**

### Tip 1: Subject or object reference words

Be careful – reference words can change depending on whether they are the subject or the object of the sentence. For example:

Overseas students often find university courses difficult.

- They often find university courses difficult.
- Overseas students often find them difficult.

Mr Smith works with Mr Jones every day.

- He works with Mr Jones every day.
- Mr Smith works with him every day.

### Tip 2: Singular and plural

When talking generally, you may find that some singular nouns take a plural reference word. For example:

*A teacher (singular) should always be prepared. **They** (plural) should also be punctual.*

**Tip 3: The dummy subject**

Sometimes 'it' can appear in a sentence but it is not a true reference word – it doesn't refer back to anything specific. This is called the dummy subject. For example:

*It is commonly accepted that people with a higher education generally work in higher paid jobs.*

In the sentence above, 'it' does not refer to anything specific, just the general situation.

Practice by reading the sentences below and deciding whether 'it' is used as a reference word or a dummy subject.

- Look at those clouds. It's going to rain.
- Homework is essential. It allows students to review work they have studied in class.
- Admittedly, student depression is hard to investigate as few people are willing to talk openly about it.
- It can take up to four years to complete a degree.
- Otago is a very popular university. It was the first university in New Zealand.

1. Show answer **This is a dummy subject**
2. Show answer **This is a reference word**
3. Show answer **This is a reference word**
4. Show answer **This is a dummy subject**
5. Show answer **This is a reference word**

**Now test yourself. Read the text below and decide what the underlined reference words refer to.**

### **Academic overdrive?**

Student life is becoming increasingly difficult. Not only are students expected to perform and compete within the class, but also to devote time and energy to extra-curricular activities as well as struggle with an increasing load of homework. The push to get into the top universities has caused many overachieving students to take on heavier workloads and more challenging classes.

This push, however, doesn't end once students reach university. In fact, when they reach the top places they have worked so hard to get into, many students are forced to work even harder than they did in high school. Once in the top universities, the pressure is on to secure a place in the top graduate school. But it doesn't end there. Once students have graduated with the best results, they find that they must continue to overextend themselves in order to secure the top jobs in their particular field. Such is the emphasis on academic success.

There are many who claim that this entire system is wrong because it puts too much emphasis on measuring achievement and not enough on true learning. This in turn has inevitable effects on the students themselves. In such a high-pressure learning environment, those that find the pressure overwhelming have nowhere to turn. In an academic world measured only by academic success, many students begin to feel a low sense of worth, yet they fear to turn to anyone for help as this would be perceived as a signal of failure, an inability to cope with that which other students appear to have no problem. This can be particularly hard for foreign students as they find themselves isolated without familiar cultural or family ties in their new environment and thus they concentrate solely on their work.

Perhaps the main thing to remember is that although it is important to study hard, school life should also be fun.

1. **This push** refers to.....
2. **They** refers to.....
3. **It** refers to.....
4. **There** refers to.....
5. **This** refers to.....
6. **Those** refers to.....
7. **This** refers to.....

Answers:

1. The push to get into top universities
2. Overachieving students (not just 'students')
3. The pressure
4. At top universities
5. Overachieving / overextending / pressurised (system)
6. Students who have overextended themselves
7. The situation where students feel depressed, have low self-esteem, feel that they cannot talk to anyone

NB: Identifying the meaning of a reference word is not a question you will be directly asked to do in IELTS.

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## Short answer questions in the IELTS reading test

In the IELTS reading test, you may be required to answer short answer questions, where you have to write one, two or three words or a number as an answer.

As with all question types, make sure you read the question instructions carefully before you answer. Do not write more than the number of words / numbers the question asks for.

Generally, the instructions and limits on word numbers are written in CAPITAL LETTERS, with **bold** and *italic* script.

For example: Answer the following questions ***USING NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS.***

If you write three words for the answer here, your answer will be marked as wrong even if you have included the two words that are correct. However, it is OK to use only one word.

Here are some common instructions for this type of question:

Answer the following questions ***USING NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS***

This means the answers will be either one or two words.

Answer the following questions ***USING NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS OR A NUMBER***

This means that at least one of the answers will be just a number – a useful tip!

Answer the following questions ***USING NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS AND / OR A NUMBER***

This means that at least one of the answers will include a number and probably another word as well

Answer the following questions ***USING NO MORE THAN ONE WORD***

This means that all of the answers are single words only

Now practice by reading the text below answering the 10 short answer questions that follow.

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## Thermal tourism

The heat in the middle of the earth is held in place by large plates that float over molten rock. At the point where these tectonic plates meet, there is a fissure through which the heat and power beneath the earth can escape, causing volcanic eruptions of liquid rock. However, there are some advantages to living close to the edge of tectonic plates.

New Zealand, being positioned on the border of two such tectonic plates, experiences a large amount of this geothermal activity, but it is more in the nature of thermally heated water than molten rock. From a tourism perspective, this has given the country the opportunity to develop a number of spas and hot pool resorts, some of the most well known being situated in and around Rotorua and Taupo.



Rotorua has earned the nickname of 'RotoVegas', in that not unlike Las Vegas it attracts a large number of international tourists every year. The majority of commercially operated tours of the North Island include a day or more in Rotorua, and very few independent travellers miss the chance to visit. From Auckland, the entry point for most visitors to the North Island, Rotorua is an idyllic car ride or bus journey through lush countryside. In addition to the numerous spas and pools, Rotorua is also a popular destination as it is a renowned centre for Maori culture. You can spend the morning walking around the area, the afternoon soaking in a hot pool and then in the evening go to a Maori concert or have a hangi, a traditional form of Maori cooking.

To name just a few of the thermal resorts in Rotorua, tourists are able to visit Hell's Gate, Wai Ora spa, the Lakeside Thermal Holiday Park, QE Health Spa and Lady Knox geyser. At Hell's Gate and Wai Ora, visitors can take advantage of the opportunity to bathe in geothermal mud and sulphurous water, although many people find Hell's Gate a little less accessible. The Lakeside Holiday Park, situated on the shores of Lake Rotorua, serves breakfast cooked in thermal steam and visitors are invited to sample the medicinal benefits of soaking in pure, hot mineral pools.



At the QE Health Spa, guests can luxuriate in a mineral water pressure spray massage. Lady Knox, one of New Zealand's most famous geysers, is one of the few geysers that you can guarantee will erupt. It is stimulated artificially as it was when it was first discovered, although these days the effect is intentional. The geyser was first discovered by convicts who used the hot water around the geyser to wash their clothes, only to find that by adding soap to the water, they triggered a chemical reaction which caused the geyser to erupt.

A scenic drive to the town of Taupo offers tourists the opportunity to visit the largest lake in New Zealand. Around the lake, which bears the same name as the town, there is an abundance of cafés, restaurants and curio shops. In both Rotorua and Taupo, accommodation is plentiful and there is an option for every budget, from campsites to five-star hotels. It is also possible to rent a bach (a holiday home), offering more independence and privacy at a reasonable price. This is the preferred option for larger groups. On the shores of Lake Taupo to the northeast there is an area of the lake which has become known as 'Hot Water Beach', as a natural stream of thermally heated water feeds into the lake. Even on the coldest days, this area offers the chance for a warm swim.

But it is not just the main centres of attraction that benefit from thermal activity. There is another Hot Water Beach on the Coromandel Peninsula, a couple of hours' drive from Auckland, where visitors can rent a spade to dig holes on the beach which then naturally fill with hot water. There is also the Miranda Springs resort, a relatively small leisure park only 45 minutes drive from Auckland. And, of course, this is in the North Island alone. In the South Island there is Hanmer Springs Thermal Reserve, situated in the north Canterbury region, about 90 minutes from Christchurch. Hanmer is an alpine town and the Thermal Reserve has been in operation since 1859. The resort's proximity to Christchurch also ensures that activities and excursions are available all year round. So wherever and whenever you go, you can always find some thermal tourist attraction.

Read the text and answer the questions that follow using **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS**.

1. How does the text refer to tourists that follow their own itineraries?

2. What does Rotorua attract to have earned parallels with an American city?
3. Where do most people first arrive when travelling in the North Island?
4. What else is Rotorua noted for?
5. Where is the most convenient place to have a mud bath?
6. What is used to start the Lady Knox geyser?
7. What is the name of New Zealand's largest lake?
8. What kind of accommodation is preferred by large parties of visitors?
9. Where in Taupo can you swim all year round?
10. Which city is the Thermal Reserve near?

Answers:

- |                           |                    |
|---------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Independent travellers | 6. Soap            |
| 2. International tourists | 7. (Lake) Taupo    |
| 3. Auckland               | 8. (A) bach        |
| 4. Maori culture          | 9. Hot Water Beach |
| 5. Wai Ora                | 10. Christchurch   |

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## Skimming and scanning in IELTS reading

One of the most common problems with the IELTS reading test is the time limit. You have 60 minutes to find 40 answers over three sections with a total of up to 3000 words. Two essential skills for getting a good IELTS result are skimming and scanning.



### Skimming

Skimming is when you very quickly look through a text looking for a general understanding of what it is about, how it is structured and how it is written. You are not looking for specific information, just an overview. A common time you may have used skimming skills is when you

deciding to buy a newspaper or magazine – you quickly look through to see if there is anything in there you may be interested in reading closely.

## Scanning

Scanning is when you are looking for a specific piece of information in a text. This could be a name, a place, a date or any specific detail. A common time for scanning would be looking through a telephone directory, looking for a specific name.

## Strategies

So what are good strategies to help you skim and scan faster?

### 1. Reading the title / looking at any illustrations

This is a **GOOD** strategy. Not all IELTS reading texts have titles, but if there is one it can often be a good indicator of what the text is about. The same is true for illustrations, which can often give you a good idea of what at least part of the text is about.

### 2. Reading every word

This is a **BAD** strategy. The IELTS test does not give you time to read every word of the complete text, and trying to do so will often mean you do not finish all three sections. The only time you should read every word is when you think you have found the answer and want to read the surrounding sentences carefully. Otherwise, you should either be skimming the text for a general understanding or scanning for something in particular.

### 3. Reading the first and last sentence of each paragraph

This is a **BAD** strategy. The IELTS test has developed to test your English level and skills, and shortcuts like this simply do not work anymore. You will miss vital information or even be led astray by sentences designed deliberately to mislead you.

### 4. Underlining/circling names as you skim

This is a **GOOD** strategy. People, places and other kinds of names can often give you a good guide for where information is in the text, and can help you come back to a specific point much faster.

### **3. Concentrating on difficult vocabulary**

This is a **BAD** strategy. It is very common to get stuck on a word or phrase when you don't know the meaning, but this is wasting precious time when you should be moving on. It's possible that you may lose a point because of a word you didn't know, but it's better to answer easier questions first and if you have time, go back to that word at the end.

### ***Now practice!***

Skim the text and answer the questions that follow. You should take no more than 60 seconds to skim the text.

Questions 1 and 2 are skimming questions. Questions 3 and 4 are scanning questions.

### ***Champions of colour blind justice***

***During the past century, as the United States of America has wrestled with the problem of inequality between blacks and whites, two names remain paramount in the struggle – Martin Luther King and Malcolm X.***

Although there were some surface similarities. Both started their own movements, organised rallies and gave many speeches both in America and abroad, yet their approaches and beliefs were radically different. King believed in peace, encouraging only a 'passive resistance' with the eventual aim of black and white people integrating and living together peacefully. While King tried to unite the races through peace, Malcolm X, on the other hand, adopted a more direct, aggressive approach. Unlike King, he did not support the idea of integration but separatism, encouraging



his listeners to recognise the suffering whites had caused blacks and to live apart in their own communities.

These men were different not only in their approaches to the problem, but also in the religious convictions that motivated them. Martin Luther King's philosophy of peace and positive reasoning was influenced by Christianity. He was active in the Church and was the leader of the Christian Leadership Conference. Malcolm X started many Muslim groups which practised a violent form of defence against any white oppression, real or imagined.

Despite their very different perspectives, there is one more similarity between these two men. Both were assassinated. Malcolm X was shot in 1965 at a rally in Harlem, victim of former supporters who had taken his doctrine of violence to heart. On 4 April 1968 King was shot as he was organising a demonstration in Memphis, but little is known of his assassin.

In the current racial climate of America, it could be said that both men succeeded, at least to a degree. There are still racial tensions, but not to the same degree. Whether Malcolm X would have approved or King would be satisfied today is another question.

Q1: The text is about \_\_\_\_\_

- A where Martin Luther King and Malcolm X lived
- B what Martin Luther King and Malcolm X believed
- C the similarities between Martin Luther King and Malcolm X

Q2: The text is written \_\_\_\_\_.

- A about the future in America.
- B in support of Malcolm X and against Martin Luther King
- C in a neutral style, presenting mostly facts

Q3: What religion was Martin Luther King? .....

Q4: What year was Malcolm X shot?

**Answers:**

1. B - The correct answer is 'what Martin Luther King and Malcolm X believed'. Although there are references to their similarities and where they were from, this isn't the focus of the complete text.
2. C - The text is written in a neutral style, presenting mostly facts
3. Christian
4. 1965

**Exercise 2:**

This page focuses specifically on scanning skills. You should be able to complete this exercise within three minutes.

Read the text and answer the questions that follow.

## Internet safety



As adults, how do we encourage our children to explore the rich resources of the Internet without exposing them to a steady stream of marketing messages, such as junk e-mail or sexually explicit material? This is a question that many people, especially parents, are struggling to answer. Although a solution has not yet been found, one possibility is to filter or block this objectionable material from children without interfering with the rights of adults to view and visit any website they like. When the US Supreme Court rejected the Communications Decency Act in June of 1997, industry and government officials alike looked to computer technology companies to create screening and filtering products to fill the gap left by this court decision.

Started in 1998, the Erasmus study set forth a plan for a family-friendly Internet that would include as a key element filtering, blocking and rating tools for parents, educators and other concerned adults. Much of the debate about appropriate content has focused on the spread of sexually explicit materials online, but there are other, equally insidious aspects. Now banned from an increasing number of traditional advertising markets, cigarette and alcohol companies have turned to cyberspace to reach their future market.

Virtually every major alcoholic beverage manufacturing company has an Internet website which developers claim targets adults of legal drinking age. Many alcohol companies 'card' visitors by requiring them to provide their date of birth before entering the site. Most sites also include a disclaimer on the opening screen indicating that visitors must be of legal drinking age. Many

children, however, easily bypass these simple precautions by providing falsified birth date information to access these sites. Once inside, it is clear that these companies are creating an environment full of activities that can and do appeal to children and teens. On some sites, visitors are encouraged to play games, download screensavers, and enter draws to win a free T-shirt. Social, legal and political pressures have denied tobacco companies web-based marketing, but there is no shortage of sites devoted to the consumption and glorification of smoking cigarettes and cigars. Pictures of women smoking cigarettes appear on sites which feature cool ways to smoke and offer lessons in smoking 'tricks'.

Although no one seems to know exactly the relationship between online marketing and alcohol and tobacco consumption, studies have shown advertising to be extremely effective in increasing youngsters' awareness of, and emotional responses to, products, their recognition of certain brands, and their desire to use these advertised products. This trend becomes even more alarming when the relationships are created between children and spokespersons for alcohol and tobacco products. Alcohol and tobacco advertising and marketing practices are also a cause for concern, with many focusing on the industries' successful efforts to target youth.

There is no easy solution to the problem, except to monitor online alcohol and tobacco promotions and develop any additional safeguards needed to protect youth that are already at risk. We are quickly moving into a digital age that will profoundly affect how children and youth grow and learn, what they value, and, ultimately, who they become. Helping our children and teens navigate in this digital culture presents both a challenge and an opportunity

Answer the following questions using ***NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS AND / OR A NUMBER.***

1. When was the Erasmus study launched?
2. When did the US Supreme Court overturn the Communications Decency Act?
3. Name one way companies encourage viewers to surf their sites.
4. What three pressures have prevented tobacco being marketed on the Internet?



5. Is the relationship between online marketing and the sale of alcohol clearly understood?

Answers:

1. 1998
  2. (June) 1997
  3. Play games OR download screensavers OR win T-shirts (you only need one of these)
  4. Social, legal, political
  5. No ('no one seems to know exactly the relationship between online marketing and alcohol and tobacco consumption')
- 

## Speed reading for IELTS

**Speed reading is an essential skill to help you read faster in the IELTS reading test**

To read faster in the IELTS reading test, you need to increase your speed reading for IELTS. There are a number of points that you need to consider:

### **1. Keep going!**



When reading, a lot of people stop and go back, reading the same words again. This is often simply a habit and one that does not necessarily help you understand any better. Spend some time reading forward only, even if you feel that you missed something or that you didn't understand. With practice, you will find that you are spending less time reading the same words twice but can get just as good an understanding of what you are reading.

## 2. Use 'chunking' techniques

When you read, try to focus not on individual words, but on small groups of words (about 3 or 4 words) each time your eyes move. This technique is called 'chunking' – looking at a chunk of words at one time. On this page, for example, your eyes should be moving a maximum of 4 times. Here is an example (your eyes should move to each different 'block' of text):

This is an example	sentence to help	you practice your	speed reading techniques.
--------------------	------------------	-------------------	---------------------------

## 3. Stop reading to yourself

When reading, many people actually 'say' the words as they read them. This might be silently or a very quiet mumble, but this slows your reading speed down. Your eyes and brain can absorb information much more quickly than your mouth and brain can form the words.

#### **4. Use a marker**

To keep an even pace and to stop yourself re-reading words (see point #1), try using a marker to keep you focussed. This can be another piece of paper that you move at a consistent speed, or even something simple like your finger or a pen. The main aim is to keep the marker moving, even though you might want to stop or slow down. When you first try this technique, you may find that you don't remember anything of what you have read. Keep trying! Remember that you are re-teaching your brain how to read!

#### **5. Read vertically, not horizontally**

When reading slowly, it is common in western languages to read from the left to the right. However, when speed reading, you will eventually be able to read straight down the page, with your eyes chunking once to the left and once to the right of the centre as you move your finger, a pen or other marker straight down the page.

#### **6. Be prepared**

Before attempting to speed read any text, try to get as much information as you can about what you are reading. Look for a title, any subheadings, images or text captions. Also very quickly scan for any **bold**, underlined or *italicised* text. Having some idea of what you are reading will help your reading speed.

#### **7. Practice!**

None of the techniques above will work by the end of today. You need to keep practising and using these techniques wherever you can. Newspapers, magazines, textbooks – all of these are good practice material.

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## Text completion questions IELTS reading

Text completion questions in IELTS are one of the most common question types. You need to be able to complete either a sentence or a short summary of the text, using either words from the text or words provided in a box.

There are two different types of instruction for text-completion questions.

- Use words from the text
- Use words from a box

Here's a short example:

**Text:** The importance that used to be attached to 'working in the city' is slowly becoming less significant. Apart from a few remaining areas like Wall Street in New York, the actual place where most of the work is completed has little or no impact on whether the work is successful. On occasions when appearance is important, many business people often prefer to meet clients in a more neutral environment such as a restaurant or conference room.

### Question 1 (use words from the text)

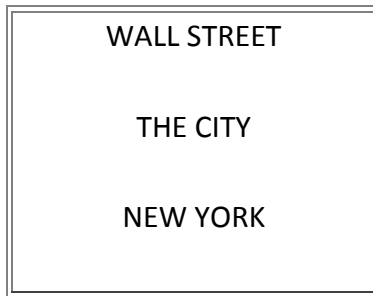
Complete the sentence below with words taken from the passage. Use **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS**.

a Having an office in the city is \_\_\_\_\_.

ANSWER: **(becoming) less significant**

### Question 2 (use words from a box)

Complete the sentence below. Choose your answer from the box.



**b** \_\_\_\_\_ is one of the exceptions to this trend.

**ANSWER: Wall Street**

Here are some points that will help with this question type:

- The text you are completing will not be in the same order as the reading text. For example, the reading text may start by talking about the history of a company, then move on to discuss their products, whereas the completion passage may ask first about products and then about the history.
- The most useful skill with these questions is the ability to identify synonyms and parallel expressions – that is, the same information but presented using different words or constructions. For example, the text may say ‘This is now known as...’ but the text completion passage ‘This has more recently been referred to as’.
- Looking for names of people or places, as well as dates and times, will often help you identify the approximate area for the answer. For example, the text may say ‘New Zealand is considered by many to be an ideal tourist destination’ – in that case, it is worth scanning the text for references to New Zealand.
- Look closely at the instructions – they could range from **USE NO MORE THAN ONE WORD FROM THE BOX** to **USE NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER FROM THE TEXT**. Writing too many words than the limit given will mean your answer is automatically wrong! A useful hint though – if the instructions state ‘**WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER**’, then at least one of the answers will be or contain a number.

- Once you have found what you think is the answer, read the summary with your answer included and check the grammar – obviously the summary you are completing must be accurate or it isn't the correct answer!

Now try the practice exercises:

## **The home office**

**A** Can you feel your anxiety and stress levels increasing every time you get caught in a traffic jam? Do you find it difficult to control your tongue when your boss points out your shortcomings yet again? Do you just not have the right kind of office attire, hate spending hours shopping for it and, frankly, would feel much better if you only had more independence, more freedom, more flexible hours and fewer people on your back? Do you yearn for state-of-the-art technology in your home, that ... wait for it ... you haven't had to pay for? If you are shouting an enthusiastic 'Yes!' in answer to these questions, then it could be time to make a career and life change that may not even require you to quit your job. Just suggest to your boss that you wish to become one of the new breed of executives whose office is based at home.

**B** Working from home is a relatively new phenomenon, but is becoming an increasingly popular option with both businesses and employees. The technology available to us now means that we no longer need to be in the same office building as our colleagues to communicate effectively with each other. E-mail, video conferencing, mobile telephones and more, mean that we can do business just as efficiently, regardless of our location.

**C** Companies may choose to employ a proportion of their staff as home-based workers, as, of course, a workforce set up in such a way requires far less office space and fewer parking facilities. The fixed costs of a business can be dramatically reduced. Employees can enjoy the added benefits of freedom to schedule the day as they choose and freedom to spend more time at home with their families. Working from home can be a particularly valid option for young mothers who wish to pursue their careers but find it impossible to be out of the house for nine or ten hours per day.

**D** We can even go so far as to say that the working-from-home phenomenon could be one of the answers to the pollution problems which the modern world has inflicted upon itself. Fewer people travelling to work every day equals fewer cars. Fewer cars, of course, equates to lower CO2 levels in the atmosphere. Governments have been trying for years to change how we commute to work, attempting to persuade us to forsake our private car journey to work each day for the hideous experience of a crowded bus or train. Most of us have been resistant, even when parking fees in city areas have been on the rise and unpredictable traffic patterns mean we have to leave our house 30 minutes earlier than necessary anyway. But working from home gives us no excuse whatsoever to emit CO2 into the atmosphere twice a day in our working week.

**E** But what are the drawbacks to working from home? There must be some or everybody would be doing it. For many of us, work is a means of escaping our nearest and dearest and making our own mark on the world. The relationships we have with our colleagues, be they good or bad, are a significant part of our life – after all, full-time workers spend a third of their day in their workplace. After-hours pursuits of a game of squash or a pint in the pub become part of our daily routine. We cement sound friendships at work and an astounding percentage of us meet our life partner at our place of work. The people there have similar ambitions and business interests and we are, after all, social animals. The majority of us become depressed and withdrawn if we do not have enough interaction with others. Some people who work from home feel that, because they do spend a large proportion of the day at home alone with few distractions, they are actually much more productive and can get tasks done in a much shorter time than in an office environment. Others, however, may be demotivated by the isolation and find it difficult to get down to tasks which have a more intangible deadline.

**F** As with most aspects of life, a balance is probably the best solution for the majority of workers – a job based at home which requires regular contact with colleagues at regular meetings. Management surveys show that successful business is easier if we operate as a team: brainstorming and sharing ideas and offering support and motivation to each other. After all, we are only human and we need others to complain to if we have a bad day at work!

Complete the sentences below. Use **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS**.

1. Working from home has been made possible by advances in .....
2. With fewer requirements for space, businesses can reduce their.....
3. Despite political pressure, most people have not changed how they ..... to work.
4. For some people, working at home can have a negative impact as the ..... can cause them to lose motivation.

Complete the summary by using words from the box below.

Technology has allowed us to (5)..... at home instead of the office. For the company, there are (6)..... incentives and for the employee there is more (7)..... . There are even (8)..... for the environment. However, there is a (9)..... factor to be considered.

benefits	flexibility	workplace	business	conduct
release	psychological	financial	friendships	environment

Answers:

1. TECHNOLOGY
2. (FIXED) COSTS
3. COMMUTE
4. ISOLATION
5. CONDUCT BUSINESS
6. FINANCIAL
7. FLEXIBILITY
8. BENEFITS
9. PSYCHOLOGICAL



## Text completion questions practice 2

### NO MEAN FEAT

*Every now and again, amid the doom and gloom of war, violence and poverty, our attention is drawn to the achievements of individuals who have overcome substantial difficulties and serve as an inspiration to us all. One such man is New Zealander Mark Inglis.*



*Until the 1980s, Mr Inglis worked as a Search and Rescue mountaineer in the Mount Cook National Park. He began his career as a professional climber in 1979 and proved himself courageous and determined even*

*then. However, in November 1982, an event occurred which was to change his life forever.*

*Called out on what first appeared to be a routine rescue operation, Mark Inglis and his partner Philip Doole were caught in a storm near the summit of Mount Cook. For the following 14 days, the two men were trapped by some of the worst weather the mountain has, forcing them to seek shelter in an ice cave which has since become known as 'Middle Peak Hotel'. Incredibly, as the weather cleared, the two men were found still alive in their cave, but two weeks of freezing conditions had taken their toll. Both men had succumbed to frostbite, and, as Inglis recounts in his book *No Mean Feat*, they both lost their lower legs.*

*It is not just as an author that Inglis has managed to carve a new life for himself. Since his time in Middle Peak Hotel, he has graduated from Lincoln University with a first class degree in Biochemistry and has also developed a successful career with Montana wines as a Senior Wine Maker. Montana Wines hails from the Marlborough region of New Zealand, as does Inglis*

*himself, and the brands from the company – including Deutz and Lindauer – have achieved international recognition.*

*An impressive effort for a double amputee, but nowhere near as impressive as Inglis's contributions to sport. He remains a keen mountaineer, cyclist and skier, having learned to ski using two prosthetic legs. He has been skiing at an international level since the 1990s and won a silver medal in the one kilometre cycling pursuit race in the Sydney Paralympic Games of 2000. In 2002, Inglis faced his biggest challenge to date as he once again went to the Mount Cook National Park and climbed the very mountain that caused his disability. Not content with this one success, Inglis has since gone on to higher peaks and, in August 2004, Inglis reached the summit of Cho Oyo in the Himalayas, an accomplishment worthy of the title 'no mean feat' considering that it is the world's sixth highest mountain.*

*With so many achievements in the face of what many would consider to have been overwhelming odds, it is perhaps not surprising that Inglis has also made a name for himself as a motivational speaker. He believes that we can all achieve success with a positive attitude, but perhaps his strongest message is that disability is an inaccurate term for people who simply have, in his own words, 'different opportunities'. In 2003, Inglis was awarded the New Zealand Order of Merit for his services to the community. It was in the same year that he travelled around the country with his inspirational roadshow 'INZONE', speaking to over 50 000 people with words of encouragement and support.*

*Inglis's affiliations to charities and societies are endless. He is the National Ambassador for the CCS, and is also the Ambassador for Outward Bound programmes offered to people with special needs. Inglis also devotes time to the Marlborough First Light Programme, which promotes and funds Outward Bound programmes to local youth.*

*In addition, Inglis is also involved in Work Choice Day (a programme designed to assist school leavers in making career choices), is a patron of the Cambodia Trust Aotearoa and associated with Back-Up New Zealand. With so many demands on his time, it's little wonder that he likes to get away to the top of a mountain every now and again.*

Now complete the text below using NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER FROM THE TEXT

Mark Inglis's challenges first began back in the 1980s when he climbed Mount Cook on a (1) . He and his partner, trapped by bad weather, were forced to spend two weeks in what became known as (2) . This resulted in amputation and, for many people, would have been the end of an active life. But Inglis has gone on to countless other successes. He has (3) from Lincoln University, became a well-known winemaker and has even turned his hand to writing. Perhaps more impressive are Inglis's achievements in sport; with the help of (4) , he has won medals for cycling and skiing and, in (5) , actually climbed again the mountain that caused his disability, two years later going on to higher altitudes in (6) . For Inglis, there is no disability, only (7) , an inspirational message he has shared with thousands of others on his travelling tour of the country under the name of (8) . He has become an (9) for two associations, and is affiliated to an international organisation, the (10) .

Answers:

1. (Routine) rescue operation
2. Middle Peak Hotel
3. Graduated
4. (Two) prosthetic legs
5. 2002
6. (The) Himalayas

7. Different opportunities
  8. INZONE
  9. Ambassador
  10. Cambodia Trust Aotearoa (the question asked specifically about an international organisation)
- 

## True False Not Given questions

This type of question can be particularly difficult, especially when you need to decide whether the answer is NOT GIVEN or FALSE. Here's a very simple example of this question type:

Text: Training to become a doctor involves long hours and little pay, and many trainees do not complete the course.

Q1. Trainee doctors are well paid. THIS IS CLEARLY FALSE – THE TEXT STATES THAT IT INVOLVES 'LITTLE PAY'

Q2. It takes a long time to become a doctor. THIS IS NOT GIVEN – THE TEXT STATES THAT THEY WORK LONG HOURS (MEANING MORE THAN THE TYPICAL 8 HOURS A DAY) BUT DOESN'T SAY HOW LONG IT TAKES TO QUALIFY AS A DOCTOR

Q3. Some trainees do not study the full qualification. THIS IS TRUE – THE TEXT STATES THAT 'MANY TRAINEES DO NOT COMPLETE THE COURSE'.

Try your skills with these TRUE / FALSE / NOT GIVEN exercises, but be careful – the text uses a lot of qualifying words (a common IELTS 'trick'!).

*Are the statements below the text TRUE, FALSE or NOT GIVEN? The questions are below the text.*

## **What is culture?**

Culture is defined as the ‘socially transmitted behaviour patterns, arts, beliefs, and institutions that are the expression of a particular class, community or period’. To most people, this is seen in terms of books, paintings, rituals and ceremonies, but recently there has been a new entrant in the field of what is considered to be ‘culture’ – the Internet.



On the Internet, science & art, media and mind combine to create a modern culture which is far more widespread than any of its predecessors. Not referring to the casual user who has no particular interest in the Internet, active supporters of the Internet as a culture have given themselves nomenclature to reflect their cultural aspirations – they are the new cyberpoets. A cyberpoet can be defined as ‘one who makes frequent trips to the edge of technology, society and traditional culture and strives to be artful in their use of virtual space’.

Supporter or opponent of this new culture, there is little doubt that the Internet offers a lot to our traditional view of culture. In just a few minutes in front of a keyboard, we can read almost anything that has ever been written, yet no paper had to be made, no library had to stay open and thus the cost remains minimal. All of this encourages even the casual surfer to explore further than he or she otherwise would have. The same effect can be observed with works of art. Previously available to be viewed only in museums if they were not in the hands of private collectors, all but a few famous works are now replicated on the Internet.

Yet the Internet is not merely a mirror of traditional culture – it is also a new culture in its own right. The medium of the Net allows for wider distribution and new platforms for most forms of art. ‘Kinetic art’ and other such computerised art forms occur with increasing regularity, both motivated by and generating an upsurge in popular and computer-mediated art.

In addition, if culture is said to be ‘socially transmitted’, then the Internet is remarkable in its ability to share, on an almost global scale, all the factors that constitute culture. We have only to hear the influence of jargon as we visit dub-dub-dub dot sites and surf the web to see how international the Internet has become to the majority.

Very few people would disagree that the cyberpoets are increasingly asserting themselves into popular culture. What is not so certain is how far this will go, as the Internet continues to assimilate more and more forms of culture, reaching global audiences. It is not inconceivable that our entire perception of culture will soon become cyber-focused.

Now answer the questions below. When you have finished, click ‘Finish quiz’. To see which of your answers were correct and the explanations why, click ‘View questions’.

Are the statements TRUE, FALSE or NOT GIVEN according to the text?

1. The majority of people consider ‘culture’ to be represented by traditional forms of art and literature.
2. The internet as a culture is not extensive.
3. Through the Internet, every written word can be accessed.
4. The Internet provides a stage for all forms of art.
5. An insignificant number remain unaffected by the international nature of the Internet.
6. Only a few people believe that ‘cyberpoets’ are becoming part of our popular culture.

Answers:

1. True – Paragraph A states “To most people, this is seen in terms of books, paintings, rituals and ceremonies”
  
2. False – Paragraph B states ‘On the Internet, science and art, media and mind combine to create a modern culture which is far more widespread than any of its predecessors’. This is further supported later in Paragraph D, ‘The medium of the Net allows for wider distribution and new platforms for most forms of art’ therefore the internet as a culture IS extensive.
  
3. False – the key here was to identify the qualifying word ‘every’ – Paragraph C states ‘In just a few minutes in front of a keyboard, we can read almost anything that has ever been written’ – almost is not a synonym for every.
  
4. False – as with question 18, the key is in the qualifying word – the question says ‘all forms of art’, but Paragraph D states ‘most forms of art’
  
5. Not given – Paragraph E refers to the international nature of the internet, but we are not given specifics on numbers that are affected.
  
6. False – the text states ‘Very few people would disagree’ (Paragraph F) – very few would disagree means most would agree, which contradicts ‘Only a few people believe’ in the question.

**Ta moko**

The practice of making markings on the human body has long been in existence. These days, it is commonly expressed by the wearing of tattoos or piercings, and is symbolic only of a personal attitude. Yet for Maori, traditionally markings on the body, called moko, have a much deeper, symbolic relevance.



Although parallels can be seen between moko and tattooing, there are a number of fundamental differences. Perhaps the most striking is that while tattoos involve the use of needles to inject ink beneath the surface of the skin, moko designs were traditionally chiselled into the skin. A painful procedure, the ink was carved into the body of the wearer by using fine chisels and a mallet.

Another contrast to the tattooing more common today is that each marking had a message which could be read by those familiar with the process. Moko told of the wearer's family and his tribe, illustrating who was a chief or other member of Maori aristocracy, and such clear markings meant that disputes over birthrights and status were avoidable. Moko spoke of social position within the tribe, and thus they were a dynamic form of marking; as tribe members grew, so too did the number and positioning of the moko. Women were tattooed on the chin once they had come of age, meaning that they were now entitled to speak at meetings. Markings under the nose represented childbirth, the first breath of the young. A moko design on the leg represented speed, on the arm showed occupation. For men, facial moko told a history of battles, injuries and victories, and it is these images that were the first to reach Europe. With wide eyes, open mouth and full facial moko, the Maori warriors were certainly feared by these early settlers.

In recent years, the moko has become synonymous with gang culture, as highlighted in a number of New Zealand-produced movies, yet at the same time has now reached international recognition, with pop stars and other celebrities adopting the designs. This is not a situation which pleases everyone. With so much cultural and historical significance, most Maori are rightfully protective of moko and its various designs. This possibly stems from a fear that Pakeha (the Maori name for the settlers) did not understand the significance of moko. For



Maori, it was something which had to be earned, that represented an achievement. Moko were not given to everyone, and permission had to be sought from Maori elders. This was often a long, involved process of discussion because, of course, once applied, the moko could not then be withdrawn. Then, too, the early history of the settlers must be considered. For many Pakeha, it was simply a nice design, a decoration for which settlers used to pay in weapons and ammunitions. They would encourage tribes to fight and return with moko heads for display in European museums, and from this beginning it is easy to understand Maori reluctance to see moko 'Westernised'.

Are the following statements **TRUE, FALSE or NOT GIVEN** according to the text?

1. Moko has an equal significance to tattooing.
2. Chisels are used in the moko process because it can create fine lines.
3. Not only the design but the placement of moko had relevance.
4. Children were forbidden from wearing moko.
5. Warriors wore moko to frighten their enemies.
6. Europeans are not allowed to wear moko designs.
7. Modern moko is only worn by gang members.
8. Traditionally, moko application involved a process of consultation and discussion.
9. Pakeha traditionally did not appreciate the significance of the designs.
10. Heads with moko designs were collected by Europeans.

Answers:

1. FALSE
2. NOT GIVEN
3. TRUE
4. NOT GIVEN
5. NOT GIVEN

6. NOT GIVEN
7. FALSE
8. TRUE
9. TRUE – ‘For many Pakeha, it was simply a nice design’
10. TRUE

Read the text below and answer the questions that follow. After checking your answers, you should also look at the vocabulary section for this text at the bottom of the page. Speed levels:

- 20 minutes or more = TOO SLOW!
- 15 minutes = not bad
- 10 minutes = good
- 5 to 10 minutes = very good
- less than 5 minutes = AMAZING!

## The Great Pacific Garbage Patch

In the middle of the Pacific Ocean, stretching from about 500 nautical miles off the coast of California, across the northern Pacific to near the coast of Japan, a circular pattern of currents has corralled an enormous vortex of floating garbage held there by swirling ocean currents. It has been described as the world’s largest rubbish dump and it is starting to alarm scientists.



There are various sources of plastic litter entering our seas: shipping, tourism, and fishing to name but a few; however, roughly 80 percent of the debris, which ranges from bottles and cigarette lighters to toothbrushes and packaging scraps, came first from the land.

The increasing rate of plastic pollution is alarming. The production of plastic doubles every decade, and ever-increasing amounts of trash makes it way to the seas—more than 6 million tons per year, according to the UN Environment Program (this is the same programme that estimated every square mile of ocean water contains approximately 46,000 pieces of rubbish).

The plastic waste was discovered in 1997 by American sailor Charles Moore, who discovered the floating mass of rubbish by chance after returning home from a yacht race. He sailed through a vast congregation of plastic has congregated into what is often referred to as the great Pacific garbage patch. However, the term may be misleading as the “patch” is in fact two massive, linked areas of circulating rubbish, says Dr Marcus Eriksen, research director of the US-based Marine Research Foundation, founded by Moore. In fact, when it was first identified in the media, there was ‘the idea that it was an island of plastic garbage that you could almost walk on. It is not quite like that. It is almost like a plastic soup.’ Dr Eriksen says.

Moore, an oceanographer who has made the study of the patch his full-time occupation, believes there is about 100 million tonnes of plastic circulating in the northern Pacific – or about 2.5 per cent of all plastic items made since 1950.

Although many media and advocacy reports have suggested the patch extends over an area greater than the continental US, recent research sponsored by the National Science Foundation suggests the affected area may be much smaller. This can be attributed to the fact that there is no specific standard for determining the boundary between the “normal” and “elevated” levels of pollutants and what constitutes being part of the patch. It is generally accepted, however, that the high concentration of plastic is approximately the size of Texas in the USA, and is growing every year.

The main problem is that generally, flotsam such as wood and paper in the ocean would biodegraded. But modern plastics do not break down like other oceanic debris, meaning objects half a century old have been found. Instead, the plastic slowly photodegrades, becoming brittle and disintegrating, and then entering the food chain. To make the situation worse, the small plastic particles acted like a sponge to trap many dangerous man-made chemicals that found

their way into the ocean, like hydrocarbons and DDT, which is then ingested by marine life which in turn is fished and ends up on sale for human consumption.

Larger pieces of plastic are also a threat to birds, which mistake them for food. Syringes, cigarette lighters and tooth brushes from the patch have all been found inside sea bird carcasses. In addition, the larger piece of plastic allows organisms and marine life to travel distances far greater than their natural habitat would allow, meaning that delicate ecosystems are at risk.

As plastic breaks down it becomes heavier than the water, so there is not only plastic floating on the surface, it is also in the column of water below and sinking to the sea bed, again causing significant damage to the marine life below.

Despite the environmental impact, there is still precious little being done to curb the problem.

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Are the following statements **TRUE, FALSE or NOT GIVEN** according to the text?

1. The great Pacific garbage patch was located intentionally.
2. The garbage patch is a singular, solid mass.
3. There are disagreements over the exact size of the patch.
4. The size of the patch is growing at an increasing rate per year.
5. Modern plastic biodegrades and does not affect marine life.
6. The plastic is not safe even when it sinks.

Answers:

1. FALSE – ‘Charles Moore, who discovered the floating mass of rubbish by chance after returning home from a yacht race’
2. FALSE – ‘the “patch” is in fact two massive, linked areas’, ‘an island of plastic garbage that you could almost walk on. It is not quite like that’

3. TRUE – ‘Although many media and advocacy reports have suggested the patch extends over an area greater than the continental US, recent research sponsored by the National Science Foundation suggests the affected area may be much smaller.’
4. NOT GIVEN – the text states that the patch ‘is growing every year’, but not that the rate is increasing.
5. FALSE – ‘modern plastics do not break down’
6. TRUE – ‘sinking to the sea bed, again causing significant damage to the marine life below’

### **Vocabulary from this text:**

**nautical** = relating to the sea.

**(to) corral** = gather together, keep in one place

**a congregation** = a gathering or collection of people or things

**misleading** = giving the wrong idea or impression (sometimes intentionally)

**elevated** = raised, higher than normal

**flotsam**= wreckage or waste found floating on or washed up by the sea

**brittle** = easily snapped or broken, but not bent

**disintegrating** = breaking apart into smaller pieces

**ingested** = eaten, swallowed, absorbed

**carcass** = the dead body of an animal

**to curb (a problem)** = to reduce, limit or stop something

## Practice

Complete the sentences below using a word from the list above. Use each word ONCE ONLY.

1. The car hit the wall with such force that it completely .
2. He comes from a background – his grandfather was a fisherman and his father was a captain.
3. As people get older, their bones often become more and can break easily.
4. The farmer had to the sheep into the barn because of the bad weather.
5. He needs to his temper if he wants to get a promotion. He won't be able to talk to staff like that if he becomes a manager!
6. The that was on the beach was ideal for starting a camp fire.
7. He was arrested for providing intentionally information to the police about where has was that night.
8. Stress can blood pressure, which can lead to a number of illnesses.
9. The police believe he some poison but they are not sure who gave it to him.
10. There was a large of birds in the area so they had to divert the flight.
11. In most western countries, only the best meat is eaten when an animal is killed – a lot of meat is still left on the .

Answers:

- |                  |                  |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1. disintegrated | 8. elevate       |
| 2. nautical      | 9. ingested      |
| 3. brittle       | 10. congregation |
| 4. corral        | 11. carcass      |
| 5. curb          |                  |
| 6. flotsam       |                  |
| 7. misleading    |                  |

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## Understand meaning in IELTS reading

As you've probably experienced, it can sometimes be difficult to understand meaning in IELTS reading, and this can sometimes be caused by *indirect sentences*, where the meaning is (intentionally) not immediately clear.

Consider this sentence – what does it mean?

“Public healthcare, on the other hand, has nothing like the resources available to those with private healthcare.”

***Public healthcare has***

- a) more resources than private healthcare*
- b) very different resources to private healthcare*
- c) fewer resources than private healthcare*

The correct answer is C. Hopefully the context helped you find the answer, but this is not always the case in the IELTS test, so test your skills with the sentences below:

Which option A-C means the same as the sentence in **bold**?

1. **One thing that isn't true about X is that the weather is always bad.**
  - a. The weather in X is never bad.
  - b. The weather in X is always bad.
  - c. The weather in X is sometimes good.
2. **Y is a multicultural city. It's the biggest city in Z. Most people think it's the capital. This, however, is a common mistake.**
  - a. Y is the capital.

- b. Y is not the capital.
  - c. Y is not the biggest city.
3. **It's highly unlikely that the government will reduce taxes.**
- a. Taxes are likely to increase.
  - b. The government will reduce taxes.
  - c. Taxes probably won't be reduced.
4. **It's a popular misconception that chocolate gives you spots.**
- a. Spots are caused by eating chocolate.
  - b. Most people are unaware that chocolate gives you spots.
  - c. Spots are not caused by chocolate.
5. **The number of private cars on the roads is getting bigger.**
- a. There are more cars being driven than before.
  - b. More and more private cars are getting bigger.
  - c. Bigger roads are becoming more common.
6. **It's not unusual for most Japanese to clean themselves before having a bath.**
- a. Most Japanese don't clean themselves before having a bath.
  - b. Most Japanese clean themselves before having a bath.
  - c. Most Japanese find cleaning themselves before a bath very unusual.
7. **Dr Johnson is not unlike his brother Dr Kerr.**
- a. Dr Johnson looks similar to Dr Kerr.
  - b. Dr Johnson doesn't like Dr Kerr.
  - c. Dr Johnson likes Dr Kerr.
8. **Peter doesn't think you should think the worst of people.**
- a. Peter thinks you should think the best of people.
  - b. Peter thinks you should think the worst of people.
  - c. Peter doesn't think about the worst people.

Answers:

- 1. C
- 2. B



3. C
4. C
5. A
6. B
7. A
8. A

### Using prefixes

Prefixes are also very important when trying to understand more complex sentences. Here are some examples:

- *Miscommunication*, even amongst speakers of the same language, can often lead to arguments.
- Before going to war, governments should carefully consider the possible impact of *anti-war* protesters.
- The Olympic Games first began in *pre-Christian* times, nearly 3000 years ago.
- After completing university courses, some *postgraduates* find themselves unable to get a good job.
- Very few people can maintain a good relationship with their *ex-husband* or *ex-wife*

Here are some explanations of common prefixes:

<b><i>Prefix</i></b>	<b><i>Meaning</i></b>	<b><i>Example word</i></b>
<b>Mis-</b>	badly or incorrectly	<i>Miscommunication</i>
<b>Anti-</b>	Opposite, opposed to, against	<i>anti-war</i>

<b>Pre-</b>	Before	<i>pre</i> -Christian
<b>Post-</b>	After	<i>post</i> graduates
<b>Ex</b>	A state which is no longer true	<i>ex</i> -husband
<b>inter-</b>	between/among	interdepartmental
<b>micro-</b>	too small to see with the naked eye	microwave
<b>pseudo-</b>	false, not true, a pretence	pseudoscience
<b>psycho-</b>	connected to the mind	psychological
<b>quasi-</b>	partly, in part	quasi-success
<b>eco-</b>	connected with the environment	ecological
<b>narco-</b>	connected with numbness	narcotic

**Challenge yourself!** In the time I have used this exercise with my classes, less than 5% of students scored 100% – see what score you can get!

Read the text below and complete the task that follows.

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, or ADHD as it is more commonly referred to, is often erroneously considered to be a



relatively modern ailment. In fact, it was first diagnosed as far back as 1845 by Dr Heinrich Hoffman, although it was not until the turn of the century that ADHD was given medical credence as Dr G. F. Still presented a paper to the Royal College of Physicians in England. Since that date, many scientists, doctors and psychologists have vastly increased the fund of information available, slowly reversing the impression that children with ADHD are simply

badly brought up. It is now commonly understood that although most children have little difficulty in concentrating on a subject, for those with ADHD, attention spans are short.

However, Robert Ashcroft, Headmaster of Oreno College, is sceptical, referring to such diagnoses as a pseudo-science. The situation, claims Ashcroft, has spawned from a modern trend towards scientifically categorising our actions, and is simply another argument in a fundamentally flawed society that does not wish to take responsibility for its behaviour.

Karen Waters is vocal in her opposition to Ashcroft and his supporters. Working with the Mental Health Board, Waters is concerned that until ADHD is officially recognised, it will continue to be misdiagnosed and sufferers will not get the help and support they need. It would appear that the tide is turning in her favour, as all but a few schools around the country have on their staff professionals trained to recognise the signs, but Waters feels this is not yet enough. Awareness of the condition, she claims, needs to be in all levels of society, not just in schools.

Although few would argue that the symptoms of ADHD can be problematic at times, not everyone sees ADHD as a negative thing. It has been argued that where traditional thinking sees lack of attention, others see boredom and a thirst for action. Those with ADHD are considered to be more creative, more likely to take risks, both physical and academic, so long as there is stimulation in it. The term 'attention deficit' is misleading, as what we are really seeing is attention inconsistency. These people have a high level of energy and, if they can find a place in the business community, can work tirelessly and brainstorm with much greater ease than so-called 'normal' people. They are intuitive and can work at problems from a different perspective, offering a flexibility that is a positive attribute in business. It is not them, argues Waters, but society itself that is disordered. With such stalwart champions, it is not beyond possibility that those with ADHD will find the support and understanding that their condition requires.

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Are the following statements **TRUE, FALSE OR NOT GIVEN** according to the article? Find evidence for your answer if possible.

1. ADHD is not a new condition.
2. It was first identified in a paper presented to the Royal College of Physicians.
3. Ashcroft does not believe in ADHD.
4. Ashcroft blames families for the situation.
5. Waters believes ADHD is too easily mistaken for other problems.
6. Not many schools have people available to help.
7. Most people do not see the negative side of ADHD.
8. The term given to the condition is inaccurate.
9. An increasing number of ADHD sufferers are being employed in business.
10. There is a chance ADHD sufferers will be better understood in the future.

**Answers:**

1. TRUE (erroneously considered...modern ailment)
  2. FALSE (diagnosed 1845...Heinrich Hoffman)
  3. TRUE (sceptical...pseudo-science)
  4. NOT GIVEN
  5. TRUE (misdiagnosed)
  6. FALSE (all but a few schools have...professionals)
  7. FALSE (few would argue...problematic at times)
  8. TRUE (term...is misleading)
  9. NOT GIVEN
  10. TRUE (not beyond possibility...find the support and understanding)
-

## Tips for the IELTS reading test

On this page are tips and hints for reading in the IELTS test. If you have a question or a tip that you think would benefit others, let us know using the message form at the bottom of the page.

### Transferring answers

A common – and very disappointing – error that occasionally happens in the reading test is that candidates do not transfer their answers to the answer sheet before the end of the 60 minutes given. That means that even if you have all the correct answers written on the question paper, you still get a score of zero. One of the most useful tips



for the IELTS reading test is to transfer your answers as soon as you finish each section, and as you get closer to the end of the test, transfer your answers as soon as you have completed them.

### The best method for sitting the IELTS reading test

There are a number of different theories about the best way of approaching the IELTS, but in our experience as IELTS trainers, the best approach is not fixed – you need to try a few different methods, find out which works best for you then stick to it. Repetition when preparing for the IELTS test is the most important point, so once you find the technique that suits you, stick to it! Here are some of the common (and effective) techniques – try them all and see which works best for you:

#### Tips for the IELTS reading test: Technique 1

Skim the text before reading any of the questions, making short notes in the margin of the page identifying what each section or paragraph relates to. Don't spend too much time reading in detail. Once you have an idea what the text relates to, go to the questions. Focus only on one question type (for example, if questions 1 to 4 are multiple choice and 5 to 7 are

short answer questions, focus only on questions 1 to 4). Because you have already skimmed the text, you should know the approximate area in which to find the answers.

*POSITIVES:* when you are focusing on find answers, you already have a clear idea of what the test is about so it should be easier to locate and confirm your answer.

*NEGATIVES:* the problem with this technique is time – you may find you are up to 10 minutes into the reading test and still have no answers to any of the questions, and this can sometimes cause candidates to panic and rush their answers.

## **Tips for the IELTS reading test: Technique 2**

Look at the first few questions, identifying keywords and qualifying words and getting a clear idea of what you are required to do (word limit in the answer, for example). Then go to the text for the first time, scanning for something that relates to question.

*POSITIVES:* you will be answering questions within the first two minutes and don't need to spend time reading sections of the text that don't relate to any of the questions.

*NEGATIVES:* even by the end of the test, you may not have a clear idea of everything in the text – only the sections which relate to the answers.

## **Writing your answers in CAPITAL LETTERS**

Write your answers in CAPITAL LETTERS – that way you won't risk losing points for punctuation (e.g. 'LONDON' is better than 'london') and your writing will be clearer and easier to read.

## **Start with the passage that interests you most**

It's often better to start with the section of the reading that interests you most – this will then leave you free to focus on the other sections knowing you have already answered 10 or more questions, relieving some of the pressure.

## **Use the question paper**

You can write, underline and make marks on the question paper – this will not be submitted with your answer sheet (although you are required to hand them in at the end of the test).

Underlining, making notes or other markings on your question paper can often help you clearly understand the topic presented in the text and can help you pinpoint or double check answers just before the end of the test.

## **Use titles, heading and subheadings**

Most reading sections will have a title and some will also have illustrations and subheadings – make sure to spend some time looking at them as they will often give you a good idea of what the text is referring to.

## **Don't get stuck on an answer**

With 60 minutes to answer 40 questions, as well as time to skim and scan the text and locate answers, you have approximately one minute to answer each question. If you find you are spending more time than that, make a clear mark on the question paper to indicate that you haven't answered that particular question then move on to the next question. If there is time later, then you can go back to that question, but spending time on a difficult answer may mean you lose more points on answers which you may have found easier. Remember that it is one point per correct answer, regardless of how difficult or easy you think it may be.

## **ALWAYS write an answer**

You are not penalised in the IELTS test for an incorrect answer in the listening or reading sections, so even if you are not sure or don't know, always write something, even if it's just a guess. You might get lucky, and it certainly won't harm!

We hope these tips for the IELTS reading test have helped, but if you have any other ideas you'd like to share, we'd love to hear from you in the comments area below!

## Tips to improve your IELTS reading

Are you taking practice test after practice, but not seeing your score improve? Stuck on the same level with your reading for ages? You're not alone – this is a very common problem, especially when you are studying on your own without a teacher or other students to help you.

The most important factor in improving your result is to spend a considerable amount of time *in reflection*, analysing practice tests you have taken to identify where your strengths and weakness are. Here are 5 handy tips for how to improve your IELTS reading result – ask yourself each of these questions at the end of every reading practice test you take and you'll be on your way to a better score!

### **Tip 1: Am I making mistakes on the same question type?**

For many IELTS candidates, Headings style questions and True / False / Not Given style questions cause the most difficulty. If you find that there is one particular question that is causing you to lose more points than any other, then that's the one you should focus on. We have tips and hints for all the IELTS question types, as well as practice exercises and tests – keep practising, keep reviewing and if needed, ask question on the comments form at the bottom of each page until you improve!

**DO: identify question types that you find difficult, study any tips and hints about those question types, practice them repeatedly**

**DON'T: keep making the same errors with the same question type!**

### **Tip 2: When I see the correct answer, do I realise where I went wrong?**

Simply accepting your answer was wrong and moving on will not help you improve. You need to look at the correct answer and consider why your answer was not correct. Did you misunderstand the question? Was there a negative prefix (UNimportant, NONflammable)



that meant you misunderstood the question or text? Was there a qualifying word that you overlooked?

**DO: spend as much time analysing your incorrect answers as you did taking the test, even if that means reading the text repeatedly until you can see the logic of the correct answer.**

**DON'T: simply move on to a new practice test hoping it will improve – without looking at your own mistakes, your result is likely to stay the same!**

### **Tip 3: Am I taking too long to read the text or questions?**

Remember that in the IELTS reading test, you don't actually have time to read – you need to be able to skim and scan, and use speed reading techniques to absorb the information as fast as possible. You also need to be disciplined – if you are spending 30 minutes on one text and questions, then you will not have time to complete the other 2 sections accurately, so get in the habit of moving on if you can't find the answer. It's better to lose one point on a difficult question than to lose two or more points on easy questions because you ran out of time!

**DO: practice speed reading, skimming and scanning, understand that you will not have time to read leisurely, accept that you may not understand 100% of the text you scan.**

**DON'T: slowly and carefully read the texts, spend more than 20 minutes on each section, get stuck on a question and spend more than 2 minutes trying to find the answer.**

### **Tip 4: Is it the text or the questions that I am misunderstanding?**

Depending on your technique, you might first skim the text then turn to the questions, or start with the questions then turn to the text. When you find an incorrect answer, spend some time considering whether you misunderstood the text or the question, and change the amount of time you spend on each part respectively. For example, if your answer is

wrong because you misunderstood the question, then allow a little extra time in the next practice test to read the questions a second or third time before deciding on the answer.

### **Tip 5: Is it a vocabulary, syntax (sentence order) or another reason why I have not understood?**

So you have an incorrect answer because you did not understand a section of text. Now look back at the text and decide why you had problems with it. If it was because of some vocabulary you didn't understand, then did you apply the skills for unknown vocabulary? If it was the sentence structure – perhaps it was a long, more complex sentence – did you break it down into smaller pieces? Turning longer sentences into shorter, simple sentences can often help you understand a lot more clearly. This takes practice, so start doing that from today! Or was there another problem – qualifying words, prefixes or indirect sentences? By spending some time analysing your own errors, you will improve your skills not just for IELTS but for your general level of English.

### **Tip 6: Did I answer all of the questions?**

Although Point 1 in the checklist advises you to skip questions if you can't find the answer, that doesn't mean you should leave the answer blank on your answer sheet. In the final minutes before the end of the reading test, put an answer that (a) seems logical (b) suits the requirements of the question – e.g. if the instructions say NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS, your answer isn't three words (c) very often is a word or words from the text. Remember that you do not lose points for giving the wrong answer, so there's no harm in taking an educated guess!

**DO: Put an answer for EVERY question**

**DON'T: leave an answer blank**

### **Tip 6: Am I skimming and scanning properly? Did I read the question?**

Understanding the question is key to getting the correct answer – you need to spend time carefully and closely reading the question. You need to read the question with much more caution than the text in general, so if it helps, carefully mark EVERY word – underlining,

circling, scribbling, whatever works for you – all of this helps your brain identify all aspects of the question. Here’s an example using a True, False, Not Given question:

***Many people believe that the rail network has been slightly improved.***

In order to correctly answer this question, you need to identify the following points:

It’s not EVERY person that has to believe this, it relates to the rail network, it uses the present perfect passive (has been) so refers to something that started in the past and is continuing now or has a current effect, it refers only to SLIGHT improvement. Missing any one of these points can lead to a wrong answer – so read the question carefully.

**DO: Read the question word for word, using your pen or pencil to mark the words you think are relevant**

**DON’T: skim the question and jump straight to the reading text**

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## IELTS reading practice (single text)

### The Populating of New Zealand

*There are many myths and legends surrounding New Zealand’s history, but what is certain is that Maori settled in the country long before the arrival of the Europeans. It is generally believed that Kupe, an explorer from Hawaiki, accompanied by a small group of others in canoes discovered the country about AD800.*



*The country was named Aotearoa, which means the Land of the Long White Cloud, and soon more fleets of canoes brought not only people but dogs, rats, kumura and other introduced foods and animals to the country. These*

*original settlers lived in tribes, called iwi, and soon learned to live comfortably in the new land. These early Maori were warriors, and tribal wars were common.*

*The population was undisturbed for over 300 years until 1642, when the Dutch explorer Abel Tasman arrived on the west coast of the country. He christened it Nieuw Zeeland, after the province of Zeeland from his own country, but Tasman's stay was short lived and his contact with the population at the time ended in a number of his crew being killed. Some hundred years later, in 1769, the British explorer Captain James Cook sailed around New Zealand. With the help of his Tahitian interpreter, Cook had the opportunity to explore the country on much friendlier terms than Tasman.*

*The first European settlers, named Pakeha by the Maori, arrived in the form of traders, looking to make their fortunes from the natural resources of New Zealand. The practice of exchanging firearms for goods paved the way for ever more deadly battles between Maori tribes, but armed warfare was not the only thing the settlers imported into the country; they also brought other social problems in the form of disease and prostitution.*

*Next came the missionaries, intent on bringing Christianity to the country. The first missionary church was established by Samuel Marsden in 1814, in an area heavily populated by Pakeha.*

*By the late 1830s, British intervention in New Zealand was becoming stronger, and eventually lead to the signing of a famous treaty, now referred to as *The Treaty of Waitangi*. Much has been written about the treaty, and it remains a heavily debated issue even to this day.*

*Meanwhile, colonisation continued on the South Island due to the discovery of gold and developments in farming. The North Island wasn't long behind as Wellington was named capital of the country in 1865. In 1947, New Zealand became fully independent, although clear signs of its connection with Britain still remain.*

1. According to Maori legend, which explorer landed in New Zealand first?
2. When did the first settlers arrive?
3. What is the Maori name for New Zealand?

4. What is the Maori word for tribe?
5. When did Tasman arrive on the shores of New Zealand?
6. What did he name the country?
7. Who arrived in 1769?
8. What nationality was his interpreter?
9. What did early European settlers exchange firearms for?
10. When did British involvement in New Zealand become noticeable?
11. What two factors made settlers go to the South Island?
12. What happened in 1865?
13. When did New Zealand become independent?

Answers:

- Kupe
  - 800AD
  - Aotearoa
  - Iwi
  - 1642
  - Nieuw Zeeland
  - Captain James Cook
  - Tahitian
  - Goods
  - 1830s
  - Gold and developments in farming
  - Wellington became the capital
  - 1947
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