



# TỔNG HỢP TIPS IELTS READING

## IELTS – SIMON

Chào bạn.

Mình là Thanh Loan. Mình chia sẻ với các bạn tài liệu luyện Reading cực kì hữu ích cho các bạn ở mọi trình độ. Từ những chia sẻ của thầy Simon ([ielts-simon.com](http://ielts-simon.com)), mình đã sắp xếp lại theo thứ tự và logic như sau:

- Những tips và chú ý chung khi ôn IELTS Reading
- Cách dạng câu hỏi trong IELTS Reading (gồm cách làm, bài tập luyện tập, đáp án)
- Tổng hợp các từ vựng và keywords table đáng để học tập

Với tài liệu này, các bạn sẽ có được những cách ôn Reading tuyệt vời. Sau khi làm xong tập này với những tips, bài tập ngắn riêng lẻ, các bạn ôn với các đề trong cuốn Cam (khuyến dùng từ 7 – 10) rồi đi thi thôi.

Chúc các bạn học hiệu quả và nhớ ủng hộ mình ☺

Sưu tầm từ trang [ielts-simon](http://ielts-simon.com) từ đầu – 31/07/2015

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# GENERAL TIPS

## 1. Basic Information

The Reading Test is immediately after the Listening Test at 10.40am. You do not get a break. There are 3 sections in the Reading Test. Each section has 13 or 14 questions, making 40 questions in total. The test lasts 60 minutes, and in that time you must write your answers on an answer sheet.

Here are some of the problems students have with IELTS Reading:

- Time is the biggest problem. Many students don't manage to finish the test.
- The texts are long and contain some difficult vocabulary.
- Students find "paragraph headings" questions difficult.
- Students find "true/ false/ not given" questions difficult.

IELTS Reading is really a test of your vocabulary. If your knowledge of English words and phrases is good, you will do well.

There are techniques that can help you to work faster and cope with the difficult question types. However, the best way to improve your IELTS Reading score is by doing a lot of reading and vocabulary work.

## **2. IELTS reading and listening scores**

Students often ask how many correct answers they need (out of 40) to get a band score of 7 in the reading and listening tests. According to official IELTS guidelines:

- Band 6 is about 23 out of 40
- Band 7 is about 30
- Band 8 is about 35

### ***Note:***

The score needed for each band can change depending on the difficulty of each test. If you have a really difficult test, the score needed for band 7 might be 28 or 29. If the test is easier, you might need to score 31 or 32 to get a 7. [Click here](#) to see the banding guide on the official IELTS website.

## **3. Finding and understanding**

IELTS reading is really a test of 2 things:

1. Can you *find* the part of the text that contains the answer?
2. Do you *understand* that part of the text?

## **Finding**

You need to be able to find the right part of the text quickly. I practise this a lot with my students: we decide which words in the question we need to search for, then we try to locate those words (or words with the same meaning) in the text.

## **Understanding**

When you have found where the answer is, you need to read that part of the text carefully. Read the sentences before and after the keywords that you found. Then it becomes a test of your vocabulary knowledge: if you don't understand the words that you are reading, it will be difficult to get the right answer.

### **4. A good study technique**

When practising with the Cambridge IELTS books, try this study technique:

- Choose a reading passage.
- Go to the back of the book and get the correct answers.
- Study the passage with the aim of proving why those answers are correct.
- Make a keyword table.

When you know what the answers are, you can focus on exam technique: searching for keywords, then reading the relevant part of the passage carefully. You might find this helps you more than simply testing yourself would.

### **5. Time**

'Not having enough time' is the biggest problem for most people taking the reading test. Here are some tips for dealing with this problem:

- Go straight to the first question. Don't waste time reading the full passage or the first sentence of each paragraph, and don't read any of the other questions.
- Do 'paragraph' questions last. Questions that ask you to match headings or statements with paragraphs are much easier if you are already familiar with the passage.

- Don't get stuck on one question. As soon as you realise that you are having difficulties with a question, leave it and move to the next one. Return to difficult questions later if you have time.
- Remember that the answers to most question sections are in order in the passage. You don't need to go back to the beginning of the passage to search for each answer.
- Only skim or scan for numbers and names. Otherwise, read at normal speed.
- Work with an alarm. You can't do this in an exam, but at home you could set the alarm (on your phone) for 2 minutes and try to do each question within this time.

***Note:***

When preparing for the reading test at home, try not to worry about time at first. Your first concern should be to get the score you need, even if it takes you 3 hours instead of 1 hour to do a full test.

## **6. Read 'real' things!**

It's frustrating to see students who rely on textbooks to teach them everything about the English language. Why read an article in an 'upper intermediate' textbook (that was probably written 10 years ago) when you could be reading 'real' articles in newspapers or on the Internet?

*Read articles because you find them interesting, not because they have been written to demonstrate a particular grammar point.*

A suggestion: if you've read anything interesting recently, put a link to it (and maybe a quick summary if you have time) in the comments area below this lesson.

## **7. Official sample papers**

Have you tried doing the test samples on the official IELTS website (ielts.org)? Click [here](#) to go to the academic reading download page, then [here](#) for the general reading samples.

## **8. Some sites for daily reading**

People often ask about extra reading practice: Is it a good idea to read newspapers or magazines, and which ones are the best for IELTS practice?

Two good places to find articles are The Economist and National Geographic. Try to spend a few minutes every day reading something from one of these sites. Make a note of some new words or phrases, and gradually your reading will improve.

## 9. Keyword technique

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pSkjHMs9GjY>

## 10. Underline key words

Hopefully you do this already, but it's worth pointing out why underlining is so important when you're doing an IELTS reading test. I tell my students to underline the main words in the question, then underline any similar words that they find as they read the passage.

There are 3 reasons why underlining is useful:

1. It encourages you to use the keyword technique to find the answers.
2. You don't lose your place in the passage when you're turning pages to check between the question and the text.
3. The same information may be relevant for a later question (e.g. when you do a 'paragraph headings' section last).

I can always tell when students have worked hard on a reading paper by the amount of underlining or highlighting they have done. If you don't usually underline things, start now!

## 11.3 study tips to help you improve your reading

Here are 3 study tips to help you improve your reading:

- As I said in Saturday's lesson, the best way to get better at the reading test is by doing more reading. Do as many practice tests as you can, and read other things e.g. books, newspapers and online articles.
- Try doing a reading test without a time limit, and with a dictionary. If you still can't get the score you need, you'll need to look carefully at what you are doing wrong.
- Spend time analysing your mistakes and the correct answers. If you don't understand why an answer was right or wrong, ask a teacher to help you. You'll improve more quickly if you learn from your mistakes.

## 12.6 tips to improve your reading

How can you improve your reading? Here are 6 tips:

1. If you want to improve your reading, the first thing to do is read a lot. There are no shortcuts or secret techniques; you will only improve with time and practice.
2. Anything you read in English is good practice, so read about subjects that interest you. Try to enjoy reading in English.
3. English is the most used language on the Internet. Whenever you search for information on the net, try searching in English first.
4. Remember that "understanding is not the same as using". Keep a notebook with useful words and phrases that you find when you're reading, and try using them in your own sentences.
5. Apart from reading things that interest you, you also need to read lots of IELTS passages. If you've done all of the tests in the Cambridge books, read the passages again without doing the questions. Use a dictionary, take notes, and try to fully understand each passage.
6. Another way to use the Cambridge tests is to look at the correct answers to each question first. Your task is to find out why those answers are correct by analysing the passage carefully and finding the 'keywords'.

I'm sure you can think of other suggestions. Be creative with your reading practice, try to enjoy the learning process, and trust that you will improve if you persist.

### **13. Try this technique**

Here's an interesting way to use reading tests from the Cambridge IELTS books:

1. Choose a passage from one of the reading tests.
2. Get the correct answers from the back of the book.
3. Now read the first question, underline keywords, and search for the answer in the passage - you already know the correct answer, so your only aim is to find **where** it is in the passage.
4. Underline words in the passage that have the same meaning as the keywords in the question.



5. When you have done this for each question, make a keyword table.

This technique forces you to stop testing yourself. Instead, it makes you focus on finding key vocabulary and understanding the reason for each answer. You might be surprised at the improvements you make if you regularly practise in this way.

#### **14. Skimming and scanning?**

Many teachers and books talk about skimming and scanning as key techniques for IELTS reading.

I have stopped using the words 'skimming' and 'scanning' in my lessons because I find that they confuse students. In fact, many students get the wrong answers because they 'skim' too quickly and miss the words that they are looking for.

So, forget 'skimming' and 'scanning' and focus on 'finding' and 'understanding'.

1. **Finding:** read the text to find words from the question.

2. **Understanding:** when you have found some key words from the question, read that part of the text carefully in order to understand it and get the right answer.

#### **15. When to skim or scan**

From my experience practising IELTS reading with students, skimming and scanning are techniques that *don't* usually help. When students try to skim or scan, they often miss the answers completely.

For example, if you are scanning for the word "buy" but the passage contains the synonym "purchase", you probably won't find the answer.

So what is the solution? Instead of skimming or scanning, I tell my students *toread at normal speed*. Only scan quickly if you are searching for a name or a number.

Many IELTS books talk about 'skimming' and 'scanning' to find answers in the reading test. But the danger is that students focus more on these techniques than on the passage that they are reading, with the result that they often miss the answers by skimming or scanning past them!

Here's some simple advice:

- **Skimming** basically means 'reading very quickly'. Only skim if you are looking for a distinctive word that doesn't have any synonyms e.g. "Manchester".
- **Scanning** basically means 'looking for something without reading'. Only scan if you're searching for a number e.g. "1999".

For all other questions, forget about skimming and scanning; just read the passage carefully at normal speed.

## **16. My advice**

Here is my list of advice and techniques for IELTS reading:

1. Don't read the whole text; you haven't got enough time. Just go straight to the questions.
2. 'Paragraph' questions are much easier if you do them last. Do other sections first.
3. The answers to most questions should be in the correct order in the text, so you don't need to go back to the beginning to start looking for the next answer.
4. Read all instructions carefully.
5. Look for 'keywords'. There are usually words in the questions that are similar to words you need to find in the text. For example, if the text contains the word "global", the question might use the word "international". If you find the similar words, you have probably found the answer.
6. You must get to the end and answer every question. If you don't finish, you might miss some easy points.
7. Some questions are difficult because their aim is to separate band 8 and band 9. Don't waste time on difficult questions. Miss them, finish the exam, and return to them at the end.

## **17. Easy questions first**

A good technique for the IELTS reading test is to do easy questions first. If you get stuck on difficult questions, miss them. Do the easy questions, then return to the tricky questions later.

**What's the easiest type of question?**

The easiest type of question is probably any question that contains a name, number or date. For these questions, it should be easy to scan the text to find where the answer is.

If you find it difficult to get started in the exam, look for a question with a name, number or date, and start there. An easy question will help you to start confidently.

### **18. Reading to get ideas**

You shouldn't think that reading practice is only useful for the reading test. Reading articles in newspapers, magazines or online is also a great way to improve your vocabulary knowledge and collect ideas for the writing and speaking tests.

For example, a recent question in the writing test asked whether or not it's useful to study history. I did a quick search online and found this article:

[Click here for the article "Why Study History?"](#)

You don't need to read the full article, but it would be useful to note down some of the main ideas. Can you find 3 arguments ***against*** studying history, and 3 reasons why we ***should*** study it?

### **19. Don't 'over-think' the answer**

I've noticed that many students get the wrong answer because they think too much! They worry about small differences in meaning. For example, look at the following part of a reading passage:

***The two week planned study into the psychological impact of prison life...***

Now decide whether the following statement is true, false or not given:

***The study aimed to investigate the mental and behavioural effects of life in prison.***

The statement is true, but many students put *not given* because they "over-think" the meaning of 'psychological'. They think that the definition of psychological must be more complex than 'mental and behavioural'.

Don't think too hard about small differences in meanings. 'Mental and behavioural' might not be a perfect definition of 'psychological', but the overall meaning is the same (a simple definition of psychology is the study of the mind and behaviour).

# GAPS FILLING

## TIPS

### Various types of gap-fill task:

- Fill the gaps in a summary with words from the passage.
- Fill the gaps in a summary using words from a given list.
- Fill the gaps to complete a table of information.
- Fill the gaps to label a diagram.

If you haven't practised these four types of gap-fill question, don't worry. The task is basically the same, and the method that I suggest for finding the answers is also the same for each type. If you've followed my reading lessons here on the blog, you can probably guess which method I'll be using!

## PRACTICES

### **Practice 1: Read the following text about universities.**

Religion was central to the curriculum of early European universities. However, its role became less significant during the 19th century, and by the end of the 1800s, the German university model, based on more liberal values, had spread around the world. Universities concentrated on science in the 19th and 20th centuries, and became increasingly accessible to the masses. In Britain, the move from industrial revolution to modernity saw the arrival of new civic universities with an emphasis on science and engineering.

The funding and organisation of universities vary widely between different countries around the world. In some countries, universities are predominantly funded by the state, while in others, funding may come from donors or from fees which students attending the university must pay.

***Complete the sentences below with NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS from the passage.***

1. The German university model, which became popular in the 19th century, promoted \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Over the last 200 years, a university education has become \_\_\_\_\_ the general public.

3. Depending on the country, universities may be funded by the state, by donors, or by fee-paying \_\_\_\_\_.

### **Practice 2: gap-fill from words in the box**

Read the passage and complete the summary using words from the box below it.  
**NB** You will not need to use all of the words.

#### **Bilinguals and Personality**

Many people believe that bilinguals have two different personalities, one for each of the languages they speak, and that switching between languages makes bilinguals act differently. Although this may seem unbelievable to some, research actually supports this idea.

According to various studies, bilinguals who are also bicultural and are actively involved in both of their cultures, interpret situations differently depending on which language they speak in. Although everyone, monolinguals and bilinguals alike, is able to change the way they feel and interpret events (a phenomenon known as frame-shifting), biculturals do this without realising when switching between languages.

The changes are not only linguistic. As an English-Spanish bicultural myself I do find I act differently depending on which culture I'm immersed in at the time. I'm often aware of the fact that when I speak to other Spanish speakers my voice is slightly louder and I gesticulate more than when I talk to English speakers. Could we then say that bilinguals have two different personalities?

(Source: [bilingualbicultural.com](http://bilingualbicultural.com))

#### **Summary**

There is some \_\_\_\_\_ to show that people who are bilingual exhibit a different \_\_\_\_\_ depending on which language they are speaking. Some bilinguals also have two \_\_\_\_\_ cultural identities, meaning that they are able to \_\_\_\_\_ their behaviour effortlessly according to their cultural \_\_\_\_\_. This may involve changes in \_\_\_\_\_ of speech or in the use of \_\_\_\_\_ language.

noise	evidence	volume
persona	characteristics	body
distinct	surroundings	facts
adapt		

**Practice 3: Read the following text about pedestrian zones in cities.**

A large number of European towns and cities have made part of their centres car-free since the early 1960s. These are often accompanied by car parks on the edge of the pedestrianised zone, and, in the larger cases, park and ride schemes. Central Copenhagen is one of the largest and oldest examples: the auto-free zone is centred on Strøget, a pedestrian shopping street, which is in fact not a single street but a series of interconnected avenues which create a very large auto-free zone, although it is crossed in places by streets with vehicular traffic. Most of these zones allow delivery trucks to service the businesses located there during the early morning, and street-cleaning vehicles will usually go through these streets after most shops have closed for the night.

In North America, where a more commonly used term is pedestrian mall, such areas are still in their infancy. Few cities have pedestrian zones, but some have pedestrianised single streets. Many pedestrian streets are surfaced with cobblestones, or pavement bricks, which discourage any kind of wheeled traffic, including wheelchairs. They are rarely completely free of motor vehicles.

***Fill the gaps below with NO MORE THAN 3 WORDS from the text.***

1. In some cases, people are encouraged to park \_\_\_\_\_ of the town or city centre.
2. The only vehicles permitted in most pedestrian zones are those used for \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ cleaning.
3. Certain types of road surface can be used to \_\_\_\_\_ traffic.

**Practice 4: Fill the gaps**

The Wright brothers, Orville and Wilbur, were two American brothers, inventors, and aviation pioneers who were credited with inventing and building the world's first successful airplane and making the first controlled, powered and sustained heavier-than-air human flight, on

December 17, 1903. In the two years afterward, the brothers developed their flying machine into the first practical fixed-wing aircraft.

The brothers' fundamental breakthrough was their invention of three-axis control, which enabled the pilot to steer the aircraft effectively and to maintain its equilibrium. This method became standard and remains standard on fixed-wing aircraft of all kinds. From the beginning of their aeronautical work, the Wright brothers focused on developing a reliable method of pilot control as the key to solving "the flying problem". This approach differed significantly from other experimenters of the time who put more emphasis on developing powerful engines. Using a small homebuilt wind tunnel, the Wrights also collected more accurate data than anyone had before, enabling them to design and build wings and propellers that were more efficient than rival models.

They gained the mechanical skills essential for their success by working for years in their shop with printing presses, bicycles, motors, and other machinery. Their work with bicycles in particular influenced their belief that an unstable vehicle like a flying machine could be controlled and balanced with practice.

*Fill each gap in the summary below with a maximum of 2 words.*

In 1903, the Wright brothers completed development of the first airplane that was capable of sustaining controlled \_\_\_\_\_. The key to their success was a system that gave the pilot the means to control and \_\_\_\_\_ the airplane. This set them apart from other inventors who had focused on building \_\_\_\_\_. The brothers had previous experience with a wide variety of \_\_\_\_\_, but it was their work with \_\_\_\_\_ that had the greatest influence on their ideas.

## **CORRECT ANSWERS FROM SIMON**

### **Practice 1**

1. (more) liberal values
2. (increasingly) accessible to
3. students

### **Practice 2**

### **Practice 3**



1. on the edge
2. delivery, street
3. discourage / discourage (any) wheeled

#### **Practice 4**

1. (human) flight
2. Steer
3. powerful engines
4. machinery
5. Bicycles

# MATCHING NAMES

## TIPS

### IELTS Reading: techniques for matching names

Today I'm attaching a reading exercise that requires you to match names with statements. For this type of question, I'm going to recommend 3 things that contradict my normal advice:

1. First, *scan* the whole passage and underline the names. I don't normally recommend scanning, because students often miss the answers when they scan too quickly. However, scanning for names of people should be easy.
2. Second, underline keywords in *all* of the questions. I usually recommend doing just one question at a time, but I break this 'rule' for any type of question that involves matching.
3. Finally, instead of reading from the beginning of the passage (my usual approach), I recommend starting with the name that is accompanied by the *smallest amount of information*. In today's exercise, for example, I would start by reading the part about Karl Marx - only one sentence! Read that sentence and compare it with the question statements, looking for similar keywords as usual.

### IELTS Reading: match the names

One type of question asks you to "*match the names with a statement*". You will see a list of people's names (often researchers or experts) and you have to match each name with a statement about what he/she did or said.

Here's some advice for this type of question:

1. Find all of the names in the passage first. Scan the whole passage quickly (don't read it, just search for the names) and underline all the names that the question asks you about.
2. Remember that academic articles often only use surnames. For example, if one of the names is Robert Smith, you might not see the first name 'Robert' in the passage. Just look for the surname 'Smith'.

3. Do difficult questions last. If one name is mentioned 3 times in 3 different paragraphs, it will be more difficult to match with a statement than a name that is only mentioned once. Start with the name that is only mentioned once.
4. When you find a match, put a cross next to the statement; you will only use each statement once.
5. As usual, look for "keywords" - words in the passage that are similar to words in the question statements.

I'll try to find an example of this type of question for next week's lesson.

## PRACTICES

*Read the following passage about the meaning of 'genius'.*

A genius is a person who displays exceptional intellectual ability, creativity, or originality, typically to a degree that is associated with the achievement of an unprecedented leap of insight. Various philosophers have proposed definitions of what genius is.

In the philosophy of David Hume, a genius is seen by others as a person disconnected from society, who works remotely, away from the rest of the world. For Immanuel Kant, genius is the ability to independently arrive at and understand concepts that would normally have to be taught by another person. Arthur Schopenhauer defined a genius as someone in whom intellect predominates over "will". According to Bertrand Russell, a genius possesses unique qualities and talents that make him or her especially valuable to society.

*Match each of the following statements to one of the philosophers below.*

1. A genius is someone who does not require instruction.
2. We tend to regard geniuses as solitary figures.
3. A genius has the ability to make an exceptional contribution to society.

A) Hume

B) Kant

C) Schopenhauer

D) Russell

## **CORRECT ANSWERS FROM SIMON**

1. B : does not require instruction = understand concepts that would normally have to be taught by another person
2. A: solitary figures = disconnected from society, who works remotely, away from the rest of the world
3. D: make an exceptional contribution to society = especially valuable to society

# MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTION TIPS

## How to do 'multiple choice'

Try following these steps when doing multiple choice questions:

1. Read the question and underline the "keywords" - these are the words that you will try to find in the passage (the main words that give the meaning of the question).
2. Read the choices and underline one or two keywords for each one. Focus on words that make the difference between each choice.
3. Go to the passage and look for the keywords from the question.
4. When you have found the right part of the passage, look for keywords from the choices.
5. Read the relevant part of the passage carefully, comparing it to each choice.
6. To be sure you have the right answer, you should be able to show that the other answer choices are wrong.

## PRACTICES

### Practice 1

The document attached below contains a multiple choice exercise from the official IELTS website, [ielts.org](http://ielts.org). Here's some advice before you try the exercise:

1. First, underline the 'keywords' in the question. In the first question, for example, I would underline **research**, **1982**, **United States** and **soil erosion**.
2. Second, underline the keywords in each of the four choices e.g. **reduced productivity by 20%** in choice A, and **India and China** in choice B.
3. Next, search for the keywords from the question. I'd look for **1982** first, then find the other keywords.
4. Finally, read the relevant section of the text carefully, and compare what it says with the information in the four choices. In question 1, you'll need to think carefully about answers A and C.

## **Practice 2: Choose the title**

*Choose the best title for the following passage from the list below it.*

How we deal with the most challenging children remains rooted in B.F. Skinner's mid-20th-century philosophy that human behaviour is determined by consequences, and that bad behaviour must be punished. During the 2011-12 school year, the US Department of Education counted 130,000 expulsions and roughly 7 million suspensions among 49 million primary and secondary students - one for every seven children. Furthermore, it is estimated that there are a quarter of a million instances of corporal punishment in US schools every year.

But contemporary psychological studies suggest that, far from resolving children's behaviour problems, these standard disciplinary methods often exacerbate them. They sacrifice long-term goals (student behaviour improving definitively) for the short-term gain of momentary peace in the classroom.

*Choose one title from the following list:*

- A) Behaviour management in US schools may do more harm than good.
- B) How to improve behaviour in schools.
- C) The US education system in crisis.
- D) The long-term goals of discipline in schools.

## **Practice 3: Choose the title**

*Read the following passage, and choose the best title from the list.*

Using a laser scan of Bourges cathedral in France, a team led by John Ochsendorf of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology have 3D-printed thousands of bricks and are building an exact 1:50 replica. The researchers hope to use the mock-up to devise a way to gauge the stability, and thus safety, of historical buildings built of brick and stone.

Building the replica is painstaking work, but Ochsendorf thinks the process itself may be as valuable as the mechanics uncovered. For students of architecture and structural engineering, hands-on experience has largely given way to computer modelling. Techniques like 3D printing could be a way of reconnecting them with the craft behind the science, he says.

(New Scientist, 14.2 14.)

- a. 3D printing a historical structure.
- b. The benefits of 3D printing.
- c. Computer modelling or hands-on experience?
- d. A damaged cathedral is rebuilt.

#### **Practice 4: Confusing choices**

This week I'm making a video lesson about multiple choice questions in the reading test. To give you an idea of how confusing these questions can be, let's look at an example from the *Official IELTS Practice Materials* book.

I've underlined keywords in the question, choices and passage. Notice that words from all four choices are mentioned in the passage. But which choice is correct?

#### ***Question:***

The Library of Congress offers and opportunity to

- A) borrow from their collection of Dutch maps
- B) learn how to restore ancient and fragile maps
- C) enjoy the atmosphere of the reading room
- D) create individual computer maps to order

#### ***Excerpt from passage:***

The world's largest collection of maps resides in the basement of the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. The collection, consisting of up to 4.6 million map sheets and 63,000 atlases, includes magnificent bound collections of elaborate maps - the pride of the golden age of Dutch cartography. In the reading rooms scholars, wearing thin cotton gloves to protect the fragile sheets, examine ancient maps with magnifying glasses. Across the room people sit at their computer screens, studying the latest maps. With their prodigious memories, computers are able to store data about people, places and environments - the stuff of maps - and almost instantly information is displayed on the screen in the desired geographic context, and at the click of a button, a print-out of the map appears.

### **Practice 5: Choose the title**

*Choose the best title for the passage below.*

- A) The story of a visionary cycling coach.
- B) Cycling's 'marginal gains' theory and its application in schools.
- C) The man behind Britain's Olympic cycling success.
- D) How cyclists implement the 'marginal gains' concept.
- E) Schools have improved since the Olympic Games.

One simple, but highly effective, lesson from the Olympics comes from the visionary British cycling coach, Dave Brailsford. Brailsford believes that by breaking down and identifying every tiny aspect of an athlete's performance and then making just a 1% improvement in each area, the athlete's overall performance can be significantly enhanced. His concept of 'the aggregation of marginal gains' has been making transformative ripples in classrooms and schools ever since the cycling team came to prominence a few years ago.

What is so brilliant about Brailsford's marginal gains concept is that it is so flexible. It provides an accessible, precise and useful language for achieving success in a school context in various ways: from students improving their learning, to teachers looking to enhance their pedagogy, and, more broadly, school leaders looking to make small, but highly significant improvements.

### **Practice 6: Read the following passage about 'mindsets' and success.**

According to Carol Dweck, individuals can be placed on a continuum according to their implicit views of where ability comes from. Some believe their success is based on innate ability; these are said to have a "fixed" theory of intelligence (fixed mindset). Others, who believe their success is based on having opposite mindset, which involves hard work, learning, training and doggedness are said to have a "growth" or an "incremental" theory of intelligence (growth mindset).

Individuals may not necessarily be aware of their own mindset, but their mindset can still be discerned based on their behaviour. It is especially evident in their reaction to failure. Fixed-mindset individuals dread failure because it is a negative statement on their basic abilities,



while growth mindset individuals do not mind or fear failure as much because they realise their performance can be improved and learning comes from failure. These two mindsets play an important role in all aspects of a person's life. Dweck argues that the growth mindset will allow a person to live a less stressful and more successful life.

***Which TWO of the following statements agree with the ideas of the writer?***

- A) Dweck believes that success depends on inherited intelligence.
- B) Dweck classifies people according to their beliefs about ability and success.
- C) We do not always realise which mindset we have.
- D) Fixed-mindset individuals fail more often than those who have a growth mindset.

**Practice 7: Read the passage and choose the best answers to the questions below.**

Ecotourism is a form of tourism where tourists visit fragile, pristine, and relatively undisturbed natural areas. Its purpose may be to educate the traveller, to provide funds for ecological conservation, to directly benefit the economic development and political empowerment of local communities, or to foster respect for different cultures and for human rights.

However, ecotourism operations occasionally fail to live up to conservation ideals. Even a modest increase in population puts extra pressure on the local environment and necessitates the development of additional infrastructure. The construction of water treatment plants, sanitation facilities, and lodges come with the exploitation of non-renewable energy sources and the utilisation of already limited local resources. The environment may suffer because local communities are unable to meet these infrastructure demands.

**1. One aim of ecotourism is to**

- A) allow people to visit areas that were previously restricted.
- B) educate local communities in fragile areas.
- C) raise money for environmental projects in natural areas.

**2. However, ecotourism can cause problems when**

- A) the local population does not welcome visitors.

B) extra facilities and amenities are required to cope with a population increase.

C) communities do not have the funds to improve local facilities.

**Practice 8: Choose the title**

*Read the following passage and choose the best title from the list below.*

The attitude of the scientific community towards the unconscious mind has shifted dramatically in recent years. While once viewed as a lazy reservoir of memories and non-task oriented behaviour, the unconscious is now regarded as an active and essential component in the processes of decision making.

Historically, the unconscious mind was considered to be the source of dreams and implicit memory (which allows people to walk or ride a bicycle without consciously thinking about the activity), as well as the storing place for memories of past experiences. But recent research reveals that the unconscious brain might also be an active player in decision making, problem solving, creativity and critical thinking. One familiar example of the operation of the unconscious in problem solving is the well-known phenomenon of the "eureka moment", when a solution to a problem presents itself without the involvement of active thinking.

A) Scientists present new findings about the unconscious mind

B) Our growing understanding of the role of the unconscious

C) How humans solve problems

D) What is a “eureka moment”?

**Practice 9: Choose the title**

*Read the following passage.*

The cinematograph is a motion picture film camera which also serves as a film projector and developer. It was invented in the 1890s, but there is much dispute as to the identity of its inventor.

Some argue that the device was first invented and patented as "Cinématographe Léon Bouly" by French inventor Léon Bouly on February 12, 1892. Bouly coined the term “cinematograph”, which translates in Greek to “writing in movement”. It is said that Bouly was not able to pay

the rent for his patent the following year, and that the brothers Auguste and Louis Lumière bought the licence.

A more popular version of events is that Louis Lumière was the first to conceptualise the idea. The Lumière brothers shared the patent, and they made their first film, *Sortie de l'usine Lumière de Lyon*, in 1894.

***Choose the best title for the whole passage from the list below.***

- A) How the cinematograph was invented
- B) The first film projector
- C) Who invented the cinematograph?
- D) What is a cinematograph?

**Practice 10. Multiple choice**

***Read the following passage about a tunnel in London.***

The Thames Tunnel is an underwater tunnel that was built beneath the River Thames in London between 1825 and 1843. It is 396 metres long, and runs at a depth of 23 metres below the river surface. It was the first tunnel known to have been constructed successfully underneath a navigable river.

Although it was a triumph of civil engineering, the Thames Tunnel was not a financial success, with building costs far exceeding initial estimates. Proposals to extend the entrance to accommodate wheeled vehicles failed, and it was used only by pedestrians. However, the tunnel did become a major tourist destination, attracting about two million people a year, each of whom paid a penny to pass under the river.

The construction of the Thames Tunnel showed that it was indeed possible to build underwater tunnels, despite the previous scepticism of many engineers. Its historic importance was recognised on 24th March 1995, when the structure was listed Grade II\* in recognition of its architectural importance.

***Which THREE of the following statements are correct?***

- ☐ A) The Thames Tunnel was the world's first ever tunnel.

- B) Construction of the tunnel was more expensive than predicted.
- C) There were plans to allow vehicles to use the tunnel.
- D) Tourism eventually made the tunnel profitable.
- E) Many engineers had already tried to build underwater tunnels.
- F) The Thames Tunnel is now considered to be a significant work of architecture.

**Practice 11:** *Read the following text, and chose the best answer to the questions below.*

### The Placebo Effect

A placebo is a sham or simulated medical intervention. Sometimes patients given a placebo treatment will have a perceived or actual improvement in a medical condition, a phenomenon commonly called the placebo effect.

A study of Danish general practitioners found that 48% had prescribed a placebo at least 10 times in the past year. The most frequently prescribed placebos were antibiotics for viral infections, and vitamins for fatigue. Specialists and hospital-based physicians reported much lower rates of placebo use.

#### ***1. The placebo effect refers to***

- A) a simulated medical treatment
- B) an improvement in a patient's health as a result of a simulated medical treatment
- C) a common medical phenomenon

#### ***2. According to a study, placebos were prescribed in Denmark***

- A) mainly by doctors working in hospitals
- B) instead of antibiotics
- C) for fatigued patients or those suffering with viruses

**Practice 12:** *Read the following text and answer the questions below.*

The ethos of the aristocracy, as exemplified in the English public schools, greatly influenced Pierre de Coubertin. The public schools subscribed to the belief that sport formed an important

part of education, an attitude summed up in the saying 'mens sana in corpore sano', a sound mind in a sound body. In this ethos, a gentleman was one who became an all-rounder, not the best at one specific thing. There was also a prevailing concept of fairness, in which practising or training was considered tantamount to cheating.

1. De Coubertin agreed with the idea that:

- A) sport is an activity for gentlemen.
- B) schooling should promote both physical and mental health.
- C) sport is the most important part of a child's education.

2. In De Coubertin's view:

- A) it is easier to be good at many sports, rather than the best at one sport.
- B) training is necessary if you want to be an all-rounder.
- C) training gives the athlete an unfair advantage.

**Practice 13:** *Read the following passage and choose the best title from the list below.*

*Future Shock* is a book written by the futurist Alvin Toffler in 1970. In the book, Toffler defines the term "future shock" as a certain psychological state of individuals and entire societies. His shortest definition for the term is a personal perception of "too much change in too short a period of time". The book became an international bestseller, selling over 6 million copies, and has been widely translated.

Toffler argued that society is undergoing an enormous structural change, a revolution from an industrial society to a "super-industrial society". This change overwhelms people, he believed, the accelerated rate of technological and social change leaving people disconnected and suffering from "shattering stress and disorientation" - future shocked. Toffler stated that the majority of social problems are symptoms of future shock. In his discussion of the components of such shock he popularized the term "information overload."

- A) A shocking vision of the future.
- B) What is "future shock"?

C) The career of the futurist Alvin Toffler.

D) A changing society.

**Practice 14: Read the passage and choose the correct answers to the questions below.**

A new 'super-Earth' has been discovered that could have a life-supporting climate and water. The planet, given the catchy name HD 40307g, was discovered in a multi-world solar system 42 light years from the Sun and lies at exactly the right distance from its star to allow liquid surface water. It orbits well within the star's "habitable" or "Goldilocks" zone - the region where temperatures are neither too hot nor too cold to sustain life.

Professor Hugh Jones, from the University of Hertfordshire said: "The longer orbit of the new planet means that its climate and atmosphere may be just right to support life. Just as Goldilocks liked her porridge to be neither too hot nor too cold but just right, this planet or indeed any moons that is has lie in an orbit comparable to Earth, increasing the probability of it being habitable." The 'super earth' is one of six planets believed to circle the dwarf star HD 40307 in the constellation Pictor. All the others are located outside the habitable zone, too close to their parent star to support liquid water.

(Taken from [this article](#) in The Independent)

***1. Why is it thought that the planet may be able to support life?***

A) It has been shown to have water.

B) It is 42 light years from the Sun.

C) It orbits its own star at the perfect distance.

D) It has several moons.

***2. Which statement is true of the "Goldilocks" zone?***

A) It is the region of a planet which has a habitable climate.

B) It refers to a zone which is too close to the parent star.

C) It refers to a planet with several moons and a long orbit.

D) It is an orbit region which is comparable to the Earth's.

**Practice 15: Read the following text and choose the best answer for each question.**

The term "IQ" comes from German "Intelligenz-Quotient", coined by the German psychologist William Stern in 1912, who proposed a method of scoring children's intelligence tests. Since the early 20th century, scores on IQ tests have increased in most parts of the world. The phenomenon of rising score performance means that if test-takers are scored by a constant standard scoring rule, IQ test scores have been rising at an average rate of around three IQ points per decade. This phenomenon was named the Flynn effect in the book *The Bell Curve* after James R. Flynn, the author who did the most to bring this phenomenon to the attention of psychologists.

1. "IQ" refers to

- A) a type of intelligence test for children
- B) a means of rating intelligence tests
- C) an area of psychology

2. Flynn noticed that

- A) IQ scores were constant around the world
- B) IQ was a global phenomenon
- C) intelligence scores had gradually risen over several decades

**Practice 16: Read the following short text, and answer the question below.**

The Eiger is a mountain in the Bernese Alps in Switzerland. Since 1935, at least sixty-four climbers have died attempting the Eiger's north face, earning it the German nickname Mordwand, literally "murder wall" - a pun on its correct title of Nordwand (North Wall). Before it was successfully climbed, in 1938, most of the attempts on the face ended tragically and the Bernese authorities even banned climbing it and threatened to fine any party that should attempt it again. Since the first successful attempt, the north face has been climbed many times, but even today it is regarded as a formidable challenge.

***Which TWO of the following statements are true according to the text?***

- A) The Eiger is the most dangerous mountain in the Bernese Alps.
- B) The north face of the mountain has an infamous history.
- C) The Nordwand was finally conquered in 1938.
- D) The Bernese authorities fined climbers who attempted the north face.
- E) Climbers consider the north face to be the world's most challenging climb.

**Practice 17: Choose the best summary**

Yesterday I recommended reading descriptions and reviews on amazon.com. Here's an example description, with a quick exercise below.

***Description of the book What are Universities for?***

Across the world, universities are more numerous than they have ever been, yet at the same time there is unprecedented confusion about their purpose and scepticism about their value. *What Are Universities For?* offers a spirited and compelling argument for completely rethinking the way we see our universities, and why we need them.

Stefan Collini challenges the common claim that universities need to show that they help to make money in order to justify getting more money. Instead, he argues that we must reflect on the different types of institution and the distinctive roles they play. In particular we must recognise that attempting to extend human understanding, which is at the heart of disciplined intellectual enquiry, can never be wholly harnessed to immediate social purposes - particularly in the case of the humanities, which both attract and puzzle many people and are therefore the most difficult subjects to justify.

At a time when the future of higher education lies in the balance, *What Are Universities For?* offers all of us a better, deeper and more enlightened understanding of why universities matter, to everyone.

***Which statement best summarises the book's message?***

- A) We do not necessarily need universities nowadays
- B) Universities should be harnessed for social purposes



C) Universities must justify the money they are given

D) We need to change our understanding of the role of universities

**Practice 18: Read the following passage about 'learning styles'.**

The term 'learning styles' refers to a variety of ways of learning. The 'learning styles' theory is based on the observation that most people prefer an identifiable method of interacting with, taking in, and processing stimuli or information. The idea of individualised 'learning styles' originated in the 1970s, and acquired enormous popularity. Proponents say that teachers should assess the learning styles of their students and adapt their classroom methods to best fit each student's preference.

The basis and efficacy of these proposals are extensively criticised. Although children and adults express personal preferences, there is no evidence that identifying a student's learning style produces better outcomes, and there is significant evidence that the hypothesis (that a student will learn best if taught in a method deemed appropriate for his or her learning style) may be invalid.

***Choose the best answer (A, B, or C) for questions 1 and 2 below.***

1. The idea that people should learn according to their preferred learning style

A) has influenced all teachers.

B) became popular around 40 years ago.

C) has never been disputed.

2. There is no evidence that

A) people have learning preferences.

B) the hypothesis might be wrong.

C) it is beneficial to identify students' preferred learning styles.

**Practice 19: Choose the best title**

***Read the following article and choose the best title from the list below.***

A new survey reveals that a family sit-down at dinnertime may reduce a teenager's risk of trying or using alcohol, cigarettes and drugs. The study surveyed more than 1,000 teens and found that those who dined with their families five to seven times a week were four times less likely to use alcohol, tobacco or marijuana than those who ate with their families fewer than three times a week.

A recent UK survey also found that dining together as a family is a key ingredient in ensuring a child's happiness. Children in the survey reported higher levels of happiness when they dined together with their families at least three times a week. "Contrary to the popular belief that children only want to spend time playing video games or watching TV," said researcher Dr. Maris Iacovou of the University of Essex, "we found that they were most happy when interacting with their parents or siblings."

- A) Children's happiness
- B) Why teenagers use alcohol, cigarettes and drugs
- C) What teenagers really want
- D) Why families should dine together

**Practice 20:** *Read the following text and answer the multiple choice questions below.*

In linguistics, a corpus (plural corpora) is a large and structured set of texts (now usually electronically stored and processed). A corpus may be used to help linguists to analyse a language, or for the purpose of dictionary writing or language teaching. The British National Corpus (BNC) is a 100-million-word text corpus of samples of written and spoken English from a wide range of sources. The corpus covers British English of the late twentieth century from a wide variety of genres with the intention that it be a representative sample of spoken and written British English of that time.

***1. What is a corpus?***

- A) A type of large dictionary.
- B) A single written text.
- C) A tool for language analysis.

## 2. Why was *the BNC compiled*?

- A) For the purpose of language teaching.
- B) To document written and spoken English from a particular period in time.
- C) To document the history of the English language.

**CORRECT ANSWER FROM SIMON**

### **Practice 1**

To download the exercise [click here](#).

### **Practice 22**

A

The first paragraph describes current behaviour management methods, and the second paragraph makes it clear that these methods are not working.

exacerbate = make problems worse (do more harm than good)

Here's why the other answers aren't suitable:

B - Paragraph 2 makes it clear that the current system is not working well. So no good solutions are given.

C - The passage is about behaviour, not about the WHOLE education system. Nothing is mentioned that suggests the whole system is in crisis.

D - Long terms goals are only mentioned as a small detail. This is not the topic of the whole passage.

### **Practice 3**

A

The cathedral is the historic structure that they are making into a 3D-printed model.

Note:

B is too general - the text isn't really about the benefits of 3D printing - it's about a specific example of 3D printing.

### **Practice 4**

D

Nothing is mentioned about 'borrowing maps' (A), 'learning to restore' (B) or 'enjoying the atmosphere' (C).

#### Practice 5

B

#### **Practice 6**

B

(classifies people according to their beliefs about ability and success = individuals can be placed on a continuum according to their implicit views of where ability comes from. Some believe their success...)

C

(We do not always realise which mindset we have = Individuals may not necessarily be aware of their own mindset)

#### **Practice 7**

1. C

2. B

Note:

For question 2, nothing is mentioned in the passage about local communities not having 'funds'. It only says they are unable to meet demand. For this reason, we can't choose answer C.

#### Practice 8

B

The aim of this exercise was to show you how you can be tricked into choosing the wrong answer.

Answers A and B are very similar, but the passage isn't really about scientists "presenting" their new findings, so the more general answer (B) is the best choice.

#### Practice 9

C.

"D" is only mentioned in the first sentence. The main topic of the whole text is "C".

#### Practice 10

B

C

F

C is correct - there were plans / proposals, and it doesn't matter whether they failed or not.

D is wrong because there is no mention of profit being made.

#### Practice 11

B

C

Most people seem to have got both answers right! If you got the wrong answer for either question, read some of the explanations by students in the comments above.

#### Practice 12

1. B (physical and mental health = a sound mind in a sound body)
2. C (training gives an unfair advantage = practising or training was considered tantamount to cheating)

"tantamount to" means "the equivalent of" or "almost the same as"

#### Practice 13

B is correct.

A is wrong because the passage is about people's reaction to the future, not a particular vision of the future.

C is wrong because there is nothing about his whole career.

D is too general - the passage is about a specific **reaction** to change. We really need something about Toffler or future shock in the title.

B is the best title because both paragraphs talk about future shock: the first paragraph contains a definition, and the second paragraph explains how future shock can occur.

#### Practice 14

1. C
2. D

In question 2, the answer "A" was a trick - the Goldilocks zone is not a region (on the surface) of a planet, it's a habitable region for the whole planet within a solar system.

Check again if you made any mistakes.

#### Practice 15

1. B
2. C

1. a means of rating intelligence tests = a method of scoring (children's) intelligence tests
2. intelligence scores had gradually risen over several decades = IQ test scores have been rising at an average rate of around three IQ points per decade

#### Practice 16

B and C

A is wrong because we don't know whether it's the MOST dangerous - there is no comparison with other mountains

B is correct. Infamous means 'famous for bad reasons' (e.g. the deaths, known as "murder wall" etc.)

C is correct - it was successfully climbed in 1938

D is wrong because we only know that they 'threatened' to fine people.

E is wrong - similar to 'A' - there is no comparison with other mountains.

#### Practice 17

D

#### Practice 18

B

C

If you got the answers wrong, some of the students' answers above explain the correct answers well

#### Practice 19

D

#### Practice 20

1. C

a corpus is a collection of texts used to help linguists analyse a language.

2. B

the BNC was made to document British English from the 20th century as "a representative sample of spoken and written British English of that time".

# WHICH PARAGRAPH CONTAINS THIS INFORMATION

## TIPS

### IELTS Reading: which paragraph contains...?

"Which paragraph contains the following information?" This type of question is not the same as "match the headings to the paragraphs".

Here are some tips for "which paragraph contains?" questions:

- Instead of looking for the main idea of each paragraph, you need to find one piece of information.
- Some paragraphs might not contain any answers.
- The same paragraph might contain more than one answer.
- It's not usually difficult to *understand* the question or answer, but it is difficult to *find* the answer.
- Do these questions last. By doing other questions first, you will become familiar with the passage, and you might remember where some of the answers are.
- Look for the easiest information first: questions that contain names, numbers or big/unusual words might be easier to find.

[Click here](#) to try an example "which paragraph contains?" question from the official IELTS website.

## PRACTICES

### Practice 1: Which paragraph contains...?

*Read the following passage about the tutorial method of teaching, which is used in some universities.*

A) The tutorial method of teaching, where students are taught individually or in very small groups of two or three, developed as the collegiate system in Oxford and Cambridge Universities established itself. Teaching has existed in Oxford since the 11th century, and the role of tutors was documented in the 15th century, when Oxford tutors were described as



‘having responsibility for the conduct and instruction of their younger colleagues’ (Moore, 1968). Thus, the early role of the tutor was both pastoral as well as academic.

**B)** One of the foundations of Oxford’s academic excellence is the dialectic of the individual, discussion-based tutorial which is reputed to have reached its unique status in the middle of the 19th century. Professor Benjamin Jowett, classicist and Master of Balliol College, Oxford, is traditionally credited with having been the guiding influence behind the establishment of the tutorial system based on the Socratic method. His students said of Jowett, ‘his great skill consisted, like Socrates, in helping us to learn and think for ourselves’ (Markham, 1967). When Jowett took up the mantle of Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University in 1882, his teaching method of Socratic dialogue became established as a ‘pattern for the whole university’ (Markham, 1967).

**C)** In the last decade, multiple studies have been conducted exploring the unique learning benefits of the tutorial method. 130 years after it was formally established as the cornerstone of Oxford education, the tutorial method retains its prestige and effectiveness. As the present university website states, it is through the tutorial system that ‘students develop powers of independent and critical thought, analytical and problem-solving abilities, and skills in both written and oral communication and argument’.

(Source: <http://www.greenes.org.uk/our-history/the-history-of-the-tutorial/>)

***Which paragraph contains the information in the statements below?***

1. The tutorial is still a key part of the Oxford education system.
2. The tutorial method encourages students to learn independently.
3. The tutorial method features in Oxford University marketing.
4. Traditionally, Oxford tutors had more than just an academic role.

**Practice 2: Which paragraph contains...?**

Today's reading exercise is attached as a PDF. Click below to download it.

Which paragraph contains?

I'll put the answers in the 'comments' area tomorrow.

# CORRECT ANSWERS FROM SIMON

## Practice 1:

1. C

(still a key part of the Oxford education system = the cornerstone of Oxford education, the tutorial method retains its prestige and effectiveness)

2. B (encourages students to learn independently = helping us to learn and think for ourselves)

3. C (features in Oxford University marketing = As the present university website states)

4. A (Oxford tutors had more than just an academic role = the early role of the tutor was both pastoral as well as academic)

## Practice 2:

1. E (For those of us who are bothered.....bewildering and frustrating experience.)

2. F (Many people make the mistake of thinking that ...)

3. B (..... just 20 percent of travel agents have ever been asked.....Despite apocalyptic warnings about climate change,....)

# TRUE/FALSE/NOT GIVEN

## TIPS

### IELTS Reading: true/false or yes/no?

Is there a difference between "true, false, not given" questions and "yes, no, not given" questions?

Yes, there is a small difference. When the questions are about *facts* in the passage, you'll be asked to decide whether the information is "true, false or not given". When the passage is about *opinions* rather than facts, you will be asked whether each statement agrees with the views given by the writer, and you'll have to answer "yes, no or not given".

**Note:** In terms of exam technique, this small difference doesn't really matter. I approach both question types in the same way. I look for keywords, and decide whether the information in the question is correct, incorrect or not given.

I'll publish a video lesson about these two question types later this week.

### IELTS reading: False or not given?

Students are often confused by the difference between 'false' and 'not given'.

You should choose *false* if the information in the passage directly contradicts the question statement; in other words, you need to be able to show that a different answer would be true. Choose *not given* only when there is no information, or not enough information.

[Click here](#) to see two example questions. The answer to the first one is 'false', and the answer to the second is 'not given'. Hopefully my explanations will help you to see the difference.

## PRACTICES

### Practice 1: Collocations

*Read the following text about 'collocation':*

Collocation is defined as a sequence of words or terms which co-occur more often than would be expected by chance. Collocation comprises the restrictions on how words can be used together, for example which prepositions are used with particular verbs, or which verbs and

nouns are used together. An example of this (from Michael Halliday) is the collocation *strong tea*. While the same meaning could be conveyed through the roughly equivalent *powerful tea*, the fact is that English prefers to speak of tea in terms of being strong rather than in terms of being powerful. A similar observation holds for *powerful computers* which is preferred over *strong computers*.

If the expression is heard often, the words become 'glued' together in our minds. 'Crystal clear', 'middle management', 'nuclear family', and 'cosmetic surgery' are examples of collocated pairs of words. Some words are often found together because they make up a compound noun, for example 'text message' or 'motor cyclist'.

***Are the statements below true, false or not given in the text?***

1. It is possible, but not normal, to say 'powerful tea'.
2. It is equally acceptable in English to say 'powerful computers' or 'strong computers'.
3. Our brains remember some pairs of words better than others.

### **Practice 2: yes, no, not given**

**Read the following passage about 'uni-tasking' and 'multi-tasking'.**

The human brain evolved to focus on one thing at a time. This enabled our ancestors to hunt animals, to create tools, and to protect their clan from predators or invading neighbours. In parallel, an attentional filter evolved to help us to stay on task, letting through only information that was important enough to deserve disrupting our train of thought.

But a funny thing happened on the way to the twenty-first century: The plethora of information and the technologies that serve our brain changed the way we use it. Increasingly, we demand that our attentional system try to focus on several things at once. Uni-tasking is getting harder and harder to do. The information age now buries us in data coming at us from every which way. We are bombarded with more information than at any time in history - the equivalent of 175 newspapers a day, five times as much information as we took in thirty years ago.

If we want to be more productive and creative, and to have more energy, the science suggests that we should tame the multi-tasking and immerse ourselves in a single task for sustained periods, say 30 to 50 minutes.

**According to the author, are the following statements correct?**

**Answer YES, NO or NOT GIVEN.**

- 1) The human brain is set up to perform many tasks at once.
- 2) The information age is characterised by our exposure to an abundance of data.
- 3) Multi-tasking may reduce human performance.

PS. Sorry if you didn't manage to comment yesterday. It seems that there was a problem with the commenting system.

**Practice 3: true, false, not given**

***Read the following passage about the daily life of a philosopher.***

For 27 years the philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer followed an identical routine. He rose every morning at seven and had a bath but no breakfast; he drank a cup of strong coffee before sitting down at his desk and writing until noon. At noon he ceased work for the day and spent half an hour practicing the flute, on which he became quite a skilled performer. Then he went out for lunch at his favourite restaurant. After lunch he returned home and read until four, when he left for his daily walk; he walked for two hours no matter what the weather. At six o'clock he visited the reading room of the library and read The Times. In the evening he attended the theatre or a concert, after which he had dinner at a hotel or restaurant. He got back home between nine and ten and went early to bed. He was willing to deviate from this routine in order to receive visitors.

***Are the following statements true, false or not given in the passage?***

1. Schopenhauer got up at the same time every day.
2. He dedicated the whole day to his work.
3. He ate the same meal every evening.
4. Schopenhauer allowed nothing to interrupt his daily routine.

**Practice 4: Both true, but why?**

A student asked me about the following passage and questions from Cambridge IELTS 8. The answer to both questions is "true", but the student asked me to explain why. Can you help?

**Part of the passage:**

The nineteenth century saw considerable interest in the nature of genius, and produced not a few studies of famous prodigies... However, the difficulty with the evidence produced by these studies, fascinating as they are in collecting together anecdotes and apparent similarities and exceptions, is that they are not what we would today call norm-referenced. In other words, when, for instance, information is collated about early illnesses, methods of upbringing, schooling, etc., we must also take into account information from other historical sources about how common or exceptional these were at the time. For instance, infant mortality was high and life expectancy much shorter than today, home tutoring was common in the families of the nobility and wealthy, bullying and corporal punishment were common at the best independent schools and, for the most part, the cases studied were members of the privileged classes. It was only with the growth of paediatrics and psychology in the twentieth century that studies could be carried out on a more objective, if still not always very scientific, basis.

**Questions (true, false or not given):**

1. Nineteenth-century studies of the nature of genius failed to take into account the uniqueness of the person's upbringing.
2. Nineteenth-century studies of genius lacked both objectivity and a proper scientific approach.

**Practice 5: true, false, not given**

***Read the following passage about a study into 'sitting'.***

The ease of our modern workday could come at the expense of our longevity. A new study of older women in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine finds that sitting for long stretches of time increases the odds of an untimely death. The more hours women in the study spent sitting at work, driving, lying on the couch watching TV, or engaged in other leisurely pursuits, the greater their odds of dying early from all causes, including heart disease and cancer.

Even women who exercised regularly risked shortening their lifespan if most of their daily hours were sedentary ones. “Even if you are doing the recommended amount of moderate to

vigorous exercise, you will still have a higher risk of mortality if you're spending too many hours sitting," says Dr. JoAnn Manson, one of the study's authors.

How much sitting can you safely do in a day? In the study, women who were inactive for 11 or more hours a day fared the worst, facing a 12% increase in premature death, but even lesser amounts of inactive time can cause problems. "Once you're sitting for more than 6 to 8 hours a day, that's not likely to be good for you," Dr. Manson says. You want to avoid prolonged sitting and increase the amount of moderate or vigorous exercise you do each day, she adds.

***Are the following statements true, false or not given?***

1. The study looked at the effects of sitting on elderly women only.
2. A link was found between hours spent sitting and serious health problems.
3. The warnings about sitting do not apply to people who exercise regularly.
4. Less than 6 hours a day is a safe amount of sitting.

**Practice 6:** *Read the following paragraph about 'minority languages'.*

Minority languages are occasionally marginalised within nations for a number of reasons. These include the small number of speakers, the decline in the number of speakers, and their occasional consideration as uncultured, primitive, or simple dialects when compared to the dominant language. Support for minority languages is sometimes viewed as supporting separatism. Immigrant minority languages are often also seen as a threat and as indicative of the non-integration of these communities. Both of these perceived threats are based on the notion of the exclusion of the majority language speakers. Often this is added to by political systems which do not provide support (such as education and policing) in these languages.

***Are the following statements true, false or not given?***

1. Minority languages sometimes disappear.
2. Minority languages are simpler to learn than majority languages.
3. Minority languages are sometimes considered to be harmful.

**Practice 7:** *Read the following passage about the performer Houdini.*

Harry Houdini (1874 to 1926) was a Hungarian-American illusionist and stunt performer, noted for his sensational escape acts. He first attracted attention as "Harry Handcuff Houdini"

on a tour of Europe, where he challenged police forces to keep him locked up. Soon he extended his repertoire to include chains, ropes slung from skyscrapers, straitjackets under water, and having to hold his breath inside a sealed milk can.

In 1904, thousands watched as Houdini tried to escape from special handcuffs commissioned by London's Daily Mirror newspaper. Another stunt saw him buried alive and only just able to claw himself to the surface. While many suspected that these escapes were faked, Houdini presented himself as the scourge of fake magicians and spiritualists. As President of the Society of American Magicians, he was keen to uphold professional standards and expose fraudulent artists. He was also quick to sue anyone who pirated his stunts.

**Are the following statements true, false, or not given in the text?**

1. Houdini was more successful in Europe than in America.
2. Many people were skeptical about Houdini's escape acts.
3. He took legal action against those who tried to copy him.

**Practice 8:** *Read the following text and answer true, false or not given.*

Coffee consumption has been shown to have minimal or no impact, positive or negative, on cancer development. However, researchers involved in an ongoing 22-year study by the Harvard School of Public Health state that "the overall balance of risks and benefits [of coffee consumption] are on the side of benefits."

Other studies suggest coffee consumption reduces the risk of being affected by Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, heart disease, diabetes mellitus type 2, cirrhosis of the liver, and gout. A longitudinal study in 2009 showed that those who consumed a moderate amount of coffee or tea (3–5 cups per day) at midlife were less likely to develop dementia and Alzheimer's disease in late-life compared with those who drank little coffee or avoided it altogether.

1. Scientists have linked coffee consumption to accelerated cancer development.
2. Some scientists believe that the benefits of drinking coffee outweigh the drawbacks.
3. Recent research links coffee consumption with a reduced risk of some illnesses.

**Practice 9:** *Read the following excerpt from a book review:*



What constitutes the good life? What is the true value of money? Why do we work such long hours merely to acquire greater wealth? These are some of the questions that many asked themselves when the financial system crashed in 2008. This book tackles such questions head-on. The authors begin with the great economist John Maynard Keynes. In 1930, Keynes predicted that within a century people's basic needs would be met, and no one would have to work more than fifteen hours a week.

Clearly, he was wrong: though income has increased as he envisioned, our wants have seemingly gone unsatisfied, and we continue to work long hours. The authors explain why Keynes was mistaken. Then, arguing from the premise that economics is a moral science, they trace the concept of the good life from Aristotle to the present and show how our lives over the last half century have strayed from that ideal. Finally, they issue a call to think anew about what really matters in our lives and how to attain it.

***Are the following statements true, false or not given?***

1. Before 2008, people were less concerned about economics.
2. Keynes' prediction about working hours was wide of the mark.
3. The book asks us to consider what is important in life.

### **Practice 10:** The Paper Clip

According to the Early Office Museum, the first patent for a bent wire paper clip was awarded in the United States to Samuel B. Fay, in 1867. This clip was originally intended primarily for attaching tickets to fabric, although the patent recognized that it could be used to attach papers together. Although functional and practical, Fay's design along with the 50 other designs patented prior to 1899 are not considered reminiscent of the modern paper clip design known today.

The most common type of wire paper clip still in use, the Gem paper clip, was never patented, but it was most likely in production in Britain in the early 1870s by "The Gem Manufacturing Company", according to the American expert on technological innovations, Professor Henry J. Petroski.

***Are the following statements true, false, or not given in the text?***

1. Samuel B. Fay's paper clip was only patented for one specific use.
2. Fay's paper clip was not as practical as those we use today.
3. Nobody has a patent on the paper clip that most people use today.

**Practice 11:** *Read the following text about sharks, then answer the questions below.*

Contrary to the common wisdom that sharks are instinct-driven "eating machines", recent studies have indicated that many species possess powerful problem-solving skills, social skills and curiosity. The brain- to body-mass ratios of sharks are similar to those of mammals and birds, and migration patterns in sharks may be even more complex than in birds, with many sharks covering entire ocean basins. However, shark behaviour has only begun to be formally studied, so there is much more to learn.

A popular myth is that sharks are immune to disease and cancer; however, this remains to be proven. The evidence that sharks are at least resistant to cancer and disease is mostly anecdotal and there have been few, if any, scientific or statistical studies that show sharks to have heightened immunity to disease.

*According to the text, are the following statements true, false or not given?*

1. Research shows that sharks are more intelligent than most people think.
2. Relative to their body size, sharks have bigger brains than birds.
3. There is no real evidence proving that sharks are resistant to diseases.
4. 3. TRUE - 'this remains to be proven'.

**Practice 12:** *Read the following passage about the scientist Michael Faraday.*

Michael Faraday, (1791 - 1867) was an English scientist who contributed to the fields of electromagnetism and electrochemistry. Although Faraday received little formal education he was one of the most influential scientists in history, and historians of science refer to him as having been the best experimentalist in the history of science.

The young Michael Faraday, who was the third of four children, having only the most basic school education, had to educate himself. At fourteen he became the apprentice to George Riebau, a local bookbinder and bookseller. During his seven-year apprenticeship he read many

books, including Isaac Watts' *The Improvement of the Mind*, and he enthusiastically implemented the principles and suggestions contained therein.

In 1812, at the age of twenty, and at the end of his apprenticeship, Faraday attended lectures by the eminent English chemist Humphry Davy. Faraday subsequently sent Davy a three-hundred-page book based on notes that he had taken during these lectures. Davy's reply was immediate, kind, and favourable. When one of the Royal Institution's assistants was sacked, Davy was asked to find a replacement, and appointed Faraday as Chemical Assistant at the Royal Institution.

***Are the following statements true, false or not given?***

1. Many experts regard Faraday as the foremost experimentalist of all time.
2. Faraday educated himself by reading books that were recommended to him by George Riebau.
3. Faraday came to the attention of a famous chemist after he wrote a book based on the chemist's lectures.

**Practice 13:** *Read the following passage about 'habits'.*

“All our life, so far as it has definite form, is but a mass of habits,” William James wrote in 1892. Most of the choices we make each day may feel like the products of well-considered decision making, but they’re not. They’re habits. And though each habit means relatively little on its own, over time, the meals we order, what we say to our kids each night, whether we save or spend, how often we exercise, and the way we organize our thoughts and work routines have enormous impacts on our health, productivity, financial security, and happiness. One paper published by a Duke University researcher in 2006 found that 40 percent or more of the actions people performed each day weren’t actual decisions, but habits.

***Do the statements below agree with the ideas expressed by the author? Write YES, NO or NOT GIVEN.***

1. The majority of choices we make on a daily basis are conscious decisions.
2. Saving money is the key to financial security.
3. Habits account for at least 40 percent of the things we do each day.

**Practice 14:** *Look at the following extract from a text about diaries:*

Many diaries of notable figures have been published and form an important element of autobiographical literature. Samuel Pepys (1633-1703) is the earliest diarist who is well-known today; his diaries, preserved in Magdalene College, Cambridge, were first transcribed and published in 1825. Pepys was amongst the first who took the diary beyond mere business transaction notation, into the realm of the personal.

***According to the text, are the following statements true, false, or not given?***

1. Samuel Pepys is more famous today than he was during his own lifetime.
2. Pepys kept a diary for purely business reasons.

Please share your answers in the "comments" section below. Can you explain your answers? I'll add the correct answers tomorrow.

**Practice 15:** *Read the following text about last year's oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.*

The *Deepwater* Horizon oil spill is making Americans think more about a clean energy future – but not yet to the extent of having to pay for it, or to tackle climate change, one of the leading US thinkers on global warming policy said yesterday.

US citizens are "horrified" by the pollution in the Gulf of Mexico, and are starting to think more about cleaner energy sources such as wind and wave power, said Eileen Clausen, president of America's foremost climate think-tank, the Washington-based Pew Center on Global Climate Change.

However, she said, when consumers are asked by pollsters if they would be willing to pay more for such a future, they say no, and say the government should pay. Furthermore, Ms Clausen said, the Gulf disaster was giving US energy policy "a nudge rather than a shift" in the direction of clean energy, but it would probably not be enough to bring forward legislation to curb carbon emissions, at least for the present.

(The Independent, 21.6.10)

***Are the following statements true, false or not given according to the text?***

1. The oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico was the result of a human error.

2. US citizens accept that they will need to pay for a clean energy future.
3. In spite of the disaster, the government is unlikely to introduce laws to reduce carbon emissions.

**Practice 16:** *Read the following text and answer true, false or not given.*

The killer whale, commonly referred to as the orca, and less commonly as the blackfish, is a toothed whale belonging to the oceanic dolphin family. Killer whales are found in all oceans, from the frigid Arctic and Antarctic regions to tropical seas. As a species they have a diverse diet, although individual populations often specialize in particular types of prey. Some feed exclusively on fish, while others hunt marine mammals such as sea lions, seals, walruses and even large whales. Killer whales are regarded as apex predators, lacking natural predators and preying on even large sharks.

Killer whales are highly social; some populations are composed of family groups which are the most stable of any animal species. Their sophisticated hunting techniques and vocal behaviors, which are often specific to a particular group and passed across generations, have been described as manifestations of culture.

1. Killer whales are predominantly found in cold water areas.
2. Some killer whale groups only eat fish.
3. They may even eat large sharks.
4. Killer whales are able to pass on skills to their young.

**Practice 17:** *Read the text below about the Stanford marshmallow experiment.*

The Stanford marshmallow experiment was a study on deferred gratification. The experiment was conducted in 1972 by psychologist Walter Mischel of Stanford University. It has been repeated many times since, and the original study at Stanford is regarded as one of the most successful experiments in the study of human behaviour. In the study, a marshmallow was offered to each child. If the child could resist eating the marshmallow, he was promised two instead of one. The scientists analysed how long each child resisted the temptation of eating the marshmallow, and whether or not doing so had an effect on their future success. The results provided researchers with great insight on the psychology of self control.

*Are the following statements true, false or not given?*

1. When repeated by other researchers, the experiment was less successful.
2. Children were offered a second marshmallow if they managed not to eat the first one.
3. Scientists found a correlation between resisting temptation and future success.

**Practice 18:** *Read the text below about Issac Newton.*

Sir Isaac Newton was an English physicist, mathematician, astronomer, natural philosopher, alchemist, and theologian. His *Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica* (Latin for "Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy"; usually called the *Principia*), published in 1687, is one of the most important scientific books ever written. It lays the groundwork for most of classical mechanics.

Newton is considered by many scholars and members of the general public to be one of the most influential people in human history. French mathematician Joseph-Louis Lagrange often said that Newton was the greatest genius who ever lived. Newton himself had been rather more modest of his own achievements, famously writing in a letter to Robert Hooke in February 1676: "If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants."

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

1. Newton's *Principia* is recognised as a groundbreaking text in its field.
2. Many experts regard Newton as the greatest genius the world has seen.
3. Newton wrote that he had achieved everything without the help of others.

**Practice 19:** *Read the following text about "green taxes" in Britain.*

According to a survey, most Britons believe "green" taxes on 4×4s, plastic bags and other consumer goods have been imposed to raise cash rather than change our behaviour, while two-thirds of Britons think the entire green agenda has been hijacked as a ploy to increase taxes.

The UK is committed to reducing carbon emissions by 60 per cent by 2050, a target that most experts believe will be difficult to reach. The results of the poll by Opinion, a leading research company, indicate that maintaining popular support for green policies may be a difficult act to pull off and attempts in the future to curb car use and publicly fund investment in renewable resources will prove deeply unpopular.

The findings were released as the Prince of Wales yesterday called on Britain's business leaders to take "essential action" to make their firms more sustainable. Speaking in central London to some of the country's leading chief executives, Prince Charles said: "What more can I do but urge you, this country's business leaders, to take the essential action now to make your businesses more sustainable. I'm exhausted with repeating that there really is no time to lose."

*Are the following statements true, false, or not given in the text?*

1. Most Britons think that the Government wants to change people's behaviour.
2. By the year 2050 the Government will have imposed higher green taxes.
3. The survey predicts that it will be difficult to change people's dependence on cars.
4. The Prince of Wales believes that most businesses are not sustainable.

## **CORRECT ANSWERS FROM SIMON**

### **Practice 1**

1. True
2. False
3. Not given

### **Practice 2**

1. NO : (perform many tasks at once = opposite of = focus on one thing at a time)
2. YES: (exposure to an abundance of data = buries us in data coming at us from every which way)
3. YES (Multi-taking may reduce human performance = If we want to be more productive... the science suggests that we should tame the multi-tasking)

### **Practice 3**

1. True (got up at the same time = rose every day at seven)
2. False (dedicated the whole day to work = FALSE = at noon he ceased work for the day)
3. Not given (no information about the meals he ate)

4. False (allowed nothing to interrupt his daily routine = FALSE = He was willing to deviate from this routine in order to receive visitors)

#### **Practice 4**

Let's use the "keyword" technique to understand why both answers are TRUE.

1.

Nineteenth-century studies of the nature of genius = The nineteenth century... nature of genius... not a few studies (meaning 'many studies') failed to take into account = they are not norm-referenced... we must also take into account the uniqueness of the person's upbringing = information about how common or exceptional these were... For instance...

2.

Nineteenth-century studies lacked objectivity = it was only... in the twentieth century that studies could be carried out on a more objective... basis

#### **Practice 5**

1. True
2. True
3. False
4. Not Given

#### **Practice 6**

1. NOT GIVEN ('disappear' is not mentioned, it only says 'marginalised', which means 'treated as less important')
2. NOT GIVEN (there is nothing about how easy they are to learn)
3. TRUE (considered to be harmful = seen as a threat)

#### **Practice 7**

1. NG (there isn't a comparison between Europe and America)
2. T (people were skeptical = many suspected that these escapes were faked)
3. T (legal action against those who tried to copy him = sue anyone who pirated his stunts)



### **Practice 8**

1. FALSE (Coffee consumption has been shown to have minimal or no impact, positive or negative, on cancer development)
2. TRUE (the overall balance of risks and benefits [of coffee consumption] are on the side of benefits)
3. TRUE (...study in 2009 showed that those who consumed a moderate amount of coffee or tea were less likely to develop dementia and Alzheimer's)

### **Practice 9**

1. NG
2. T
3. T

Note: The phrase "wide of the mark" means "not correct" and is quite a normal phrase / idiom in English.

### **Practice 10**

1. False
2. Not given
3. True

### **Practice 11**

1. TRUE - 'contrary to common wisdom' means 'the opposite to what most people think'. 'Problem-solving skills etc.' refers to 'intelligence'.
2. FALSE - relative mass to body size is similar, not bigger. (You could say that 'mass' is not strictly the same as 'size' but this is too technical for IELTS)

### **Practice 12**

1. True
2. Not given
3. True

### **Practice 13**

1. No
2. Not given
3. Yes

### **Practice 14**

1. NOT GIVEN

We don't know how famous he was in his own lifetime, so we can't compare.

2. FALSE

The opposite is true - he used his diary for MORE than just business. The key word is "beyond" (more than).

### **Practice 15**

1. NOT GIVEN
2. FALSE (they say no, and say the government should pay)
3. TRUE (it would probably not be enough to bring forward legislation to curb carbon emissions)

### **Practice 16**

1. NOT GIVEN "predominantly" (= mainly) is the key word in the question. We know that they are found in all oceans, but we don't know where they are MAINLY found.
2. TRUE only eat fish = feed exclusively on fish
3. TRUE may even eat large sharks = preying on even large sharks
4. TRUE pass on skills to their young = techniques and behaviours... passed across generations

### **Practice 17**

1. NOT GIVEN (nothing is mentioned about how successful the repeats were)

2. TRUE (If the child could resist eating the marshmallow, he was promised two instead of one.)

3. NOT GIVEN (We know that they "analysed" whether or not resisting temptation had an effect on future success, but we don't know if they "found" this to be the case)

Check carefully if you were tricked!

### **Practice 18**

1. TRUE 'lays the groundwork' and 'groundbreaking' give the same idea (even if they don't mean EXACTLY the same thing) - don't "over-think" this question.

2. NOT GIVEN We only read about one expert who says Newton was the greatest genius - we don't know what other experts think.

3. FALSE 'standing on the shoulders of giants' means that his work depended on the previous work of other scientists (don't "over-think" this question - Newton clearly relied on other people's work, and this is a kind of help).

### **Practice 19**

1. FALSE (have been imposed to raise cash rather than change our behaviour)

2. NOT GIVEN (2050 is mentioned, but there is no mention of imposing higher taxes)

3. TRUE (attempts in the future to curb car use... will prove deeply unpopular)

4. NOT GIVEN (Prince Charles wants businesses to be MORE sustainable, BUT he does not say that most businesses are UNSustainable)

# MATCHING HEADING

## TIPS

Here are my top 4 tips for how to answer 'paragraph headings' questions:

### 1. Do these questions last

'Paragraph headings' questions are difficult, especially because the answers will not be in order in the text. For most other types of question, the answers will be in order in the text. So, do the other questions first, then you will be familiar with the text when you return to the 'paragraph headings' questions. You might even find that you are able to match some of the paragraphs really quickly because you remember what they were about.

### 2. Start with the shortest paragraphs

Instead of starting with the first paragraph, why not start with the shortest paragraph? If there is a really short paragraph, it should be easier to match it to a heading. Then you will have fewer headings to choose from for the longer paragraphs.

### 3. Look for similar words

As with most types of IELTS reading question, you should be able to find words in the paragraph that are similar to words in the heading.

### 4. Move on if you are spending too much time

'Paragraph headings' questions often take a long time. Don't allow yourself to use more than 20 minutes for each reading passage. If you haven't finished after 20 minutes, move on to the next passage.

## PRACTICES

### Practice 1:

Try this 'paragraph headings' question from Cambridge IELTS 7, page 48-50.

*Choose the correct heading for the paragraph below.*

1. Co-operation of district officials.
2. Government authorities' instructions.

It would have been easy to criticise the MIRTP for using in the early phases a 'top-down' approach, in which decisions were made by experts and officials before being handed down to communities, but it was necessary to start the process from the level of the governmental authorities of the district. It would have been difficult to respond to the requests of villagers and other rural inhabitants without the support and understanding of district authorities.

**Note:**

Is it true that the answer is always in the first sentence of the paragraph?

**Practice 2:** *Match the correct headings with the paragraphs below.*

1. The causes of stress among employers and employees
2. The increase in work-related stress
3. The increase in visits to physicians
4. Stress has wide-ranging effects on the body and on behaviour

**A)** The number of stress-related disability claims by American employees has doubled according to the Employee Assistance Professionals Association in Arlington, Virginia. Seventy-five to ninety percent of physician visits are related to stress and, according to the American Institute of Stress, the cost to industry has been estimated at \$200 billion-\$300 billion a year.

**B)** It is clear that problems caused by stress have become a major concern to both employers and employees. Symptoms of stress are manifested both physiologically and psychologically. Persistent stress can result in cardiovascular disease, a weaker immune system and frequent headaches, stiff muscles, or backache. It can also result in poor coping skills, irritability, jumpiness, insecurity, exhaustion, and difficulty concentrating. Stress may also perpetuate or lead to binge eating, smoking, and alcohol consumption.

**Practice 3:**

The space agency NASA proposes six "lunar exploration themes" to answer the question, "Why should we return to the Moon?"

.....

***Match each heading from the following list with one of the themes described below.***

- A) Economic Expansion
- B) Scientific Knowledge
- C) Global Partnerships
- D) Human Civilisation
- E) Public Engagement
- F) Exploration Preparation

- 1.** Extend human presence to the Moon to enable eventual settlement.
- 2.** Pursue scientific activities that address fundamental questions about the history of Earth, the solar system and the universe; and therefore, about our place in them.
- 3.** Test technologies, systems, flight operations and exploration techniques to reduce the risks and increase the productivity of future missions to Mars and beyond.
- 4.** Provide a challenging, shared and peaceful activity that unites nations in pursuit of common objectives.
- 5.** Expand Earth's economic sphere, and conduct lunar activities with benefits to life on the home planet.
- 6.** Use a lively space exploration program to engage the public, encourage students and help develop the high-technology workforce that will be required to address the challenges of tomorrow.

**Practice 4:**

**Read the following passage and choose the best heading.**

The environmental challenges posed by agriculture are huge, and they'll only become more pressing as we try to meet the growing need for food worldwide. We'll likely have two billion more mouths to feed by mid-century - more than nine billion people. But sheer population growth isn't the only reason we'll need more food. The spread of prosperity across the world, especially in India and China, is driving an increased demand for meat, eggs and dairy,

boosting pressure to grow more corn and soybeans to feed more cattle, pigs and chickens. If these trends continue, the double whammy of population growth and richer diets will require us to roughly double the amount of crops we grow by 2050.

*(Source: National Geographic, May 2014)*

A) Two key trends driving the demand for food worldwide.

B) The impact of agriculture on the natural world.

C) Growing populations and their need for food.

**Practice 5: Read the following passage about cognitive behavioural therapy:**

**A)** Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) is a psychotherapeutic approach: a talking therapy. CBT aims to solve problems concerning dysfunctional emotions, behaviours and cognitions through a goal-oriented, systematic procedure in the present.

**B)** The particular therapeutic techniques vary, but commonly may include keeping a diary of significant events and associated feelings, thoughts and behaviours; questioning and testing cognitions, assumptions, evaluations and beliefs that might be unhelpful and unrealistic; gradually facing activities which may have been avoided; and trying out new ways of behaving and reacting. Relaxation, mindfulness and distraction techniques are also commonly included.

**C)** Going through cognitive behavioural therapy is not an overnight process for clients; a typical course consists of 12-16 hour-long sessions. Even after clients have learned to recognise when and where their mental processes go awry, it can in some cases take considerable time or effort to replace a dysfunctional process or habit with a more reasonable and adaptive one. CBT is problem-focused and structured towards the client. It requires honesty and openness between the client and therapist, as a therapist develops strategies for managing problems and guiding the client to a better life.

***Choose the best headings for paragraphs A, B and C from this list:***

1. A slow process
2. A new type of therapeutic approach
3. The benefits and drawbacks of CBT

- 4. A goal-oriented therapeutic approach
- 5. CBT therapists are always honest with their clients
- 6. The range of CBT interventions

**Practice 6: Read the following paragraph and choose the best heading.**

Melbourne has topped the list of the best cities in the world to live in, according to a new report by The Economist Intelligence Unit. Vienna in Austria and Vancouver in Canada came in second and third place respectively on the Global Livability Ranking. Cities across the world are awarded scores depending on lifestyle challenges faced by the people living there. Each city is scored on its stability, healthcare, culture and environment, education and infrastructure. This is the third time that the Australian city has topped the list. Unfortunately, UK cities fared worse on the list with London coming 55 out of 140 cities while Manchester was ranked 51. The report also shows that livability across the world has fallen by 0.6 per cent.

- A) Livability survey produces some surprising results.
- B) How cities are ranked.
- C) Results of the latest “Most Livable Cities Index”.
- D) Melbourne is top city for tourists.

**Practice 7: Choose the best heading for the following paragraph from the list below.**

“Big data” is a term being used more and more by politicians. It refers to the concept that any problem – from underperforming pupils to failing hospitals – can be solved by collecting some tightly focused data, crunching it and making tweaks, such as moving pupils or changing nurses’ shifts, rather than dealing with bigger issues, such as poverty or spending cuts. This is an approach that focuses narrowly on “what works” without ever troubling to ask: “works for whom?” Its watchword is “smart”, which can easily be appreciated, rather than “right”, which can’t. Putting trust in highly educated technocrats, it is naturally less interested in public debate.

- A) How data can be used to improve society.
- B) Big data: a smart approach to politics that works for everyone.



C) A sceptical perspective on “big data”.

D) Why the public trusts technocrats more than politicians.

**Practice 8: Read the following passage about a chess-playing computer.**

**A)** On February 10, 1996, Deep Blue became the first machine to win a chess game against a reigning world champion (Garry Kasparov) under regular time controls. However, Kasparov won three and drew two of the following five games, beating Deep Blue by a score of 4–2. Deep Blue was then heavily upgraded and played Kasparov again in May 1997, winning the six-game rematch 3½–2½. Deep Blue won the deciding game six, becoming the first computer system to defeat a reigning world champion in a match under standard chess tournament time controls.

**B)** After the loss, Kasparov said that he sometimes saw deep intelligence and creativity in the machine's moves, suggesting that during the second game, human chess players had intervened on behalf of the machine, which would be a violation of the rules. IBM denied that it cheated, saying the only human intervention occurred between games. The rules provided for the developers to modify the program between games, an opportunity they said they used to shore up weaknesses in the computer's play that were revealed during the course of the match. This allowed the computer to avoid a trap in the final game that it had fallen for twice before. Kasparov demanded a rematch, but IBM refused and dismantled Deep Blue.

***Choose the best heading for paragraphs A and B from the list below.***

1. The first chess-playing computer
2. Developers' intervention is questioned
3. Chess champion accepts defeat
4. Program developers caught cheating
5. A victory for artificial intelligence

**Practice 9: Read the following paragraph about the inventor Thomas Edison.**

Thomas Edison was an American inventor and businessman. He developed many devices that greatly influenced life around the world, including the phonograph, the motion picture camera, and a long-lasting, practical electric light bulb. He was one of the first inventors to apply the

principles of mass production and large-scale teamwork to the process of invention, and because of that, he is often credited with the creation of the first industrial research laboratory. Edison is the fourth most prolific inventor in history, holding 1,093 US patents in his name, as well as many patents in the United Kingdom, France, and Germany. He is credited with numerous inventions that contributed to mass communication and, in particular, telecommunications.

***Choose the best heading for the paragraph from the list below.***

- A) The creator of the first industrial research laboratory.
- B) A pioneering and prolific inventor.
- C) Edison's contribution to mass communication.

**Practice 10:** *Read the following paragraphs, taken from The Guardian newspaper.*

**A)** The hunt for intelligent species outside Earth may be a staple of literature and film – but it is happening in real life, too. Nasa probes are on the lookout for planets outside our solar system, and astronomers are carefully listening for any messages being beamed through space. How awe-inspiring it would be to get confirmation that we are not alone in the universe, to finally speak to an alien race. Wouldn't it?

**B)** Well no, according to the eminent physicist Stephen Hawking. "If aliens visit us, the outcome would be much as when Columbus landed in America, which didn't turn out well for the Native Americans," Hawking has said in a forthcoming documentary made for the Discovery Channel. He argues that, instead of trying to find and communicate with life in the cosmos, humans would be better off doing everything they can to avoid contact.

**C)** Hawking believes that, based on the sheer number of planets that scientists know must exist, we are not the only life-form in the universe. There are, after all, billions and billions of stars in our galaxy alone, with, it is reasonable to expect, an even greater number of planets orbiting them. And it is not unreasonable to expect some of that alien life to be intelligent, and capable of interstellar communication.

***Match each paragraph with one of the headings below.***

1. A pessimistic prediction.

2. The probability of life existing on other planets.
3. Astronomers send messages through space.
4. How to avoid contact with aliens.
5. The search for alien life-forms.
6. Life-forms exist on other planets.

### **Practice 11: Similar paragraph headings**

Sometimes two paragraph headings are very similar, making it difficult to decide which one is correct. Look at this example from Cambridge IELTS 1.

#### ***Paragraph:***

For the first time, dictionary publishers are incorporating real, spoken English into their data. It gives lexicographers (people who write dictionaries) access to a more vibrant, up-to-date vernacular language which has never really been studied before. In one project, 150 volunteers each agreed to discreetly tie a Walkman recorder to their waist and leave it running for anything up to two weeks. Every conversation they had was recorded. When the data was collected, the length of tapes was 35 times the depth of the Atlantic Ocean. Teams of audio typists transcribed the tapes to produce a computerised database of ten million words.

#### ***Which paragraph heading would you chose, and why?***

1. New method of research
2. The first study of spoken language

### **Practice 12: Choose the correct heading for the paragraph from the list below.**

- A) The environmental impact of estuaries
- B) The human impact on certain coastal areas
- C) Why estuaries will disappear

An estuary is a partly enclosed coastal body of water with one or more rivers or streams flowing into it, and with a free connection to the open sea. Estuaries are amongst the most heavily populated areas throughout the world, with about 60% of the world's population living along estuaries and the coast. As a result, estuaries are suffering degradation by many factors,

including overgrazing and other poor farming practices; overfishing; drainage and filling of wetlands; pollutants from sewage inputs; and diking or damming for flood control or water diversion.

**Practice 13: Read the following paragraph and choose the best heading.**

‘Phonics’ refers to a method for teaching speakers of English to read and write that language. Young learners are taught to associate the sounds of spoken English with letters or groups of letters. For example, they might be taught that the sound /k/ can be represented by the spellings c, k, ck, ch, or q. Using phonics, the teacher shows the learners how to blend the sounds of letters together to produce approximate pronunciations of unknown words. Phonics is a widely used method of teaching children to read and decode words. Children begin learning to read using phonics usually around the age of 5 or 6.

- A) A new method for language learning
- B) How phonics benefits children in the UK
- C) Children learn to link sounds with spellings
- D) Children learn the rules of spelling

**Practice 14: Difficult paragraph headings**

Sometimes it's difficult to decide between two paragraph headings. Look at this example from Cambridge IELTS 6.

***Paragraph:***

It was once assumed that improvements in telecommunications would lead to more dispersal in the population as people were no longer forced into cities. However, the ISTP team's research demonstrates that the population and job density of cities rose or remained constant in the 1980s after decades of decline. The explanation for this seems to be that it is valuable to place people working in related fields together. 'The new world will largely depend on human creativity, and creativity flourishes where people come together face-to-face.'

***Which paragraph heading would you choose and why?***

1. The impact of telecommunications on population distribution
2. The benefits of working together in cities

Feel free to discuss this question in the "comments" area below this lesson. Why is your answer correct, and why is the other answer wrong?

## **CORRECT ANSWERS FROM SIMON**

### **Practice 1**

The answer is in the last line: "support and understanding of district authorities". support and understanding = co-operation, authorities = officials

Note: Sometimes you can get the general idea of the paragraph from the first sentence, but NOT always.

### **Practice 2**

A = 2

(increase in work-related stress = stress related claims by employees has doubled)

B = 4

(This paragraph is about the effects/symptoms of stress, NOT the causes)

### **Practice 3**

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

### **Practice 4**

A      The two trends are population growth and the spread of prosperity.

### **Practice 5**

1. A = 4 solve problems... through a goal-oriented, systematic procedure = a goal-oriented therapeutic approach

2. B = 6 the particular therapeutic techniques vary, but commonly may include... = The range of CBT interventions
3. C = 1 going through cognitive behavioural therapy is not an overnight process for clients; a typical course consists of 12-16 hour-long sessions = a slow process

### **Practice 6**

C

### **Practice 7**

C      sceptical = having doubts, not convinced about something

### **Practice 8**

A) 5

B) 2

### **Practice 9**

B - this is the overall idea of the paragraph. The other answers are too specific.

### **Practice 10**

A = 5 (the search = the hunt)

B = 1

C = 2 (probability = Hawking BELIEVES, but it is not certain)

A couple of the questions tricked some people, so check again if you got any answers wrong.

### **Practice 11**

Number 1: "New method of research"

This is a tricky question as both headings are similar and seem to be correct.

However, the paragraph DOESN'T talk about the first study of spoken language. It talks about the first time spoken English has been used when collecting data for dictionaries. In other words, it's a new way of writing dictionaries, not the first study of spoken language.

### **Practice 12**

B

- After "as a result" you can read a list of things that are affecting estuaries. Every factor in the list is related to human activity.
- There is nothing about the effect that estuaries have on the environment, and there is nothing about estuaries disappearing completely.

### **Practice 13**

- C "Associate sounds with letters" means the same as "link sounds with spellings".

### **Practice 14**

2 - benefits of working together in cities.

Be careful: the answer is NOT always in the first sentence. The first sentence is about what people "once assumed" (used to think), but the word "However" introduces the real topic of the paragraph.

# IELTS READING

## KEYWORD TABLES AND VOCAB

### IELTS Reading vocabulary

In all IELTS reading tests you'll find good vocabulary. When you read a good word or phrase, do you notice it, write it down, and try to use it?

Here's some good vocabulary from last week's reading exercise:

- the ease
- our modern workday
- come at the expense of
- longevity
- long stretches of time
- increases the odds of
- an untimely death
- engage in leisurely pursuits
- shortening their lifespan
- sedentary
- moderate to vigorous exercise
- mortality
- inactive
- fared the worst
- premature death
- lesser amounts of
- prolonged

This is the kind of "less common vocabulary" that could help you to get a band 7 or higher in the writing and speaking tests. Can you use these words and phrases in your own sentences?



## **IELTS Reading: work on vocabulary**

If you want to improve your IELTS reading score, the most important thing to work on is your knowledge of vocabulary. Exam techniques are of little use if you don't understand the words that you are reading.

I tell my students to keep a vocabulary notebook, and to use a dictionary to find meanings and examples of usage. Here are some words and phrases that we noted in an IELTS reading lesson that I taught last week:

- exclusive of
- to dab
- to mimic
- a static image
- mastery
- cognitive
- a pitfall
- ground rules
- the likelihood
- to pick up a signal

To help my students, I tried to explain the meanings and to give some example sentences. Can you write your own sentences to show that you can use the vocabulary above?

## **IELTS Reading: improve your vocabulary**

Whenever you practise doing an IELTS reading test, you should treat it as an opportunity to improve your vocabulary knowledge. Look carefully at the phrases used, and the way ideas are expressed.

For example, did you notice this vocabulary in last week's lesson?

- pose a challenge
- a pressing challenge
- meet the growing need for

- more mouths to feed
- sheer population growth
- the spread of prosperity
- driving demand
- boosting pressure
- the double whammy of... and...

Try making your own sentences to practise using some of these phrases.

### **IELTS Reading is a vocabulary test**

You can't get a high score in the IELTS reading test without learning a lot of vocabulary.

For example, here are some words and phrases that my students needed to know for a reading test that we did:

- remained = stayed
- took a long time = slow
- of varying (size, price etc) = of different (size, price)
- virtually any = almost any
- non-stop = continuous
- unblemished = perfect, without a mark or scratch
- molten (glass or metal) = in liquid form due to heat
- instant commercial success = made a profit straight away
- flaws = faults, mistakes, weaknesses
- detecting = locating, finding, discovering

Write the new words and phrases that you read or hear in a notebook - that's the best way to improve your vocabulary knowledge.

Keywords in questions	Similar words in the passage
Dutch maps	Dutch cartography (means 'mapmaking')
create maps	a print-out of the map appears
to order	at the click of a button
increase in	has doubled
work-related stress	stress related claims by employees
effects on body and behaviour	symptoms manifested physiologically and psychologically

**Note:** Don't just have a quick look at this table. Look carefully at the vocabulary, and make a note of anything useful.

### IELTS Reading: general reading keywords

Here's a keyword table from the general reading test on pages 41-42 of Official IELTS Practice Materials book 2.

Keywords in questions	Similar words in the passage
save time and money	reduce time and costs
the company will build on its	we will develop our
work in a variety of locations	work at offices around the country
staff without own desk	people who no longer have a desk
possessions	belongings
authorisation	approval
send form to	use the eForm... email it to

I tell all of my students to practise both academic and general reading tests. The techniques that we use are the same, and the vocabulary is always useful.

### IELTS Reading: 'paragraph headings' keywords

The table below shows keywords for the paragraph headings exercise on page 14 of the book called Official IELTS Practice Materials 2. If you can find a copy of this passage (about 'Seaweeds of New Zealand'), it's a good one to try.

Keywords in questions	Similar words in the passage
nutritional value of seaweeds	seaweed is a wholesome food
range of products	cosmetics, confectionary, toothpastes
under-use	were not much utilised
appearance and location	colour and position
how seaweeds reproduce	propagation of seaweeds
don't sink or dry out	stay on the surface, keep moist

Keywords in questions	Similar words in the passage
a scientific measure	a measure in the scientific sense
in the early 1800s	in the early 19th century
measure weather conditions	made weather observations
the original scale	the initial scale
wind description	winds are described

Keywords in questions	Similar words in the passage
a key part	the cornerstone
is still	retains
learn independently	think for ourselves
features in university marketing	the university website states
more than just an academic role	role was pastoral as well as academic
traditionally	the early role

Keywords in questions	Similar words in the passage
he got up every day	he rose every morning
he allowed	he was willing
interrupt his routine	deviate from this routine
human civilisation	human settlement
exploration preparation	test exploration techniques
global partnerships	unites nations, common objectives

## IELTS Reading:

Here's another keyword table with vocabulary from Cambridge IELTS 5, test 4, passage 1. Look carefully at the paraphrasing used.

Keywords in questions	Similar words in the passage
reasons for the expansion of tourism	market is booming, requires little investment
disruptive effects of wilderness tourism	effects on local community, physical impact is another problem
low financial cost	little or no investment
throughout the year	(opposite of) limited to parts of the year
fall in food produced locally	decline in farm output
revived production	renaissance in production

### IELTS Reading: keywords

The following question demonstrates the 'keyword technique' perfectly.

#### Question (true, false or not given?)

If you return unwanted shoes straightaway, with a receipt, the shop will probably give you a refund.

#### Passage

Go back to the shop with proof of purchase. If you return faulty shoes at once, you have a right to insist on a refund. It is also likely that you will get one if you change your mind about the shoes and take them back immediately.

#### Task

The correct answer is 'true', but can you complete the keyword table below to show how we found this answer?

Keywords in questions	Similar words in the passage
1	take them back
2	you change your mind about the shoes
straightaway	3
with a receipt	4
will probably give you	5
a refund	6

### CORRECT ANSWERS FROM SIMON:

1. return (...shoes)
2. unwanted (shoes)
3. immediately
4. with proof of purchase
5. it is likely that you will get
6. one / a refund

Note:

The correct answer is 'true'. The part about "faulty shoes" does not give you the answer. The answer comes from the part that says "if you change your mind about the shoes" - this means the shoes are "unwanted".

### IELTS Reading:

Here's my keyword table for a general reading test section in Cambridge IELTS book 5 (page 121-122).

Keywords in questions	Similar words in the passage
inconvenient for car owners	no space for parking nearby
if you like surfing the web	(it has) Broadband Internet
a new option	recent initiative
organise parking a year at a time	parking for the academic year
does not belong to the college	a privately-owned residence
do not have your own bathroom	communal bathrooms

## IELTS reading is really a vocabulary test.

For example, if you know that 'communal bathrooms' means 'shared bathrooms', you'll be able to match that with 'do not have your own bathroom'. If you don't know the meaning of 'communal', it will be difficult to get the right answer.

Here are some keywords from a General Reading test in Cambridge IELTS book 9. You don't need to do this test; just look at the vocabulary and make sure it's part of your 'repertoire'.

Keywords in questions	Similar words in the passage
invitation	being asked to
express appreciation	thank the audience
visual excitement	interesting to watch / make it come alive
increase	a burst of
without restriction	valid for all
cheapest ticket	unbeatable price
cannot get money back	non-refundable

It's always a good idea to note the 'keywords' whenever you do an IELTS reading exercise, even a short or easy one. Here are the keywords from the last two reading exercises that I put here on the site:

Keywords in questions	Similar words in the passage
elderly women	older women
effects of sitting	sitting increases...
serious health problems	heart disease and cancer
our growing understanding	recent research reveals
role of the unconscious	unconscious brain... an active player in...

Did you make a keyword table for last week's reading exercise? Here's mine:

Keywords in questions	Similar words in the passage
instruction	be taught by another person
we tend to regard geniuses	a genius is seen by others
solitary figures	disconnected from society
has the ability	possesses unique qualities
exceptional contribution to society	especially valuable to society

### **IELTS Reading: another keyword table**

Here's the key vocabulary that helped my students to get the answers to reading test 2, passage 3 in Cambridge IELTS book 9.

Keywords in questions	Similar words in the passage
achievement	success
distinctive	different
previous events	past experience
traps	pitfalls
new experiences	novelty
psychological illness	mental disorder
decide on an action	decision making

### **IELTS Reading: keywords from recent exercises**

The table below contains keywords from two recent exercises here on the blog. The first three rows of the table refer to [this exercise](#) about the effects of television, and the last three rows refer to [this passage](#) about the performer Houdini.



Keywords in questions	Similar words in the passage
scientists believe	according to research / scientists found
link between television and mental ability	watching television makes... stupider
young children	toddlers
many people were skeptical	many suspected that... were faked
he took legal action	he was quick to sue anyone
who tried to copy him	who pirated his stunts

### **IELTS Reading: keyword table**

Here's a keyword table for test 3, passage 3 in Cambridge IELTS book 5.

Keywords in questions	Similar words in the passage
a military impact	used on a battlefield
brings together separate research areas	encompassed disparate fields
become a common topic of conversation	ignited public debate
the expression was first used	the term was coined
at its lowest point	(opposite of) it peaked
the problems have not changed	(opposite of) moving the goal-posts
expectations not justified	there was undue optimism
new investment priorities	investors are now looking for

Notice the expressions "to coin a term" (to invent a new term) and "to move the goal-posts" (to change the aim). My students didn't know these phrases.

Note: the "opposite of" phrases were from 'false' answers.

### **IELTS Reading: another keyword table**

Here's a table of key vocabulary from Cambridge IELTS 8 (test 1, passage 1).

Remember that there are always words in the passage that are similar to words in the questions. If you find the similar words, you've found the answers.

Keywords in questions	Similar words in the text
affected by cold temperatures	could not be depended on in freezing weather
farming communities	where agriculture was practised
civil calendar	municipal calendar
months were equal in length	12 months of 30 days
divided the day into two equal halves	split the day into two 12-hour periods
a new cabinet shape	a new floor-standing case design
to organise public events	to co-ordinate communal activities

### **IELTS Reading: another keyword table**

The table below shows the keywords that my students found in reading test 3, passage 3 in Cambridge IELTS book 4.

Keywords in questions	Similar words from the passage
effect of recording	people talk abnormally when being recorded
taking notes	written comments
body language	non-verbal behaviour
influenced by social situation	social background... known to influence
helped to be less self-conscious	make the speaker forget about the recording
various methods	structured sessions, translation, interview
camera might miss things	camera cannot be everywhere
comment objectively	make unbiased statements
focus on	deals only with

### **IELTS Reading: more keywords**

My students and I did a quick exercise from the general reading test on page 109 of Cambridge IELTS book 9. It's a good example of the importance of searching for 'keywords'.

Here's our keyword table:

Keywords in questions	Similar words in the passage
aim	objective
present a professional image	project the professional image
must be in good condition	torn, dirty... is unacceptable
brightly coloured	flashy
avoid wearing too much	wear in moderation
are allowed	are permitted
is recommended	is strongly encouraged
if advice is repeatedly ignored	if the problem persists

### **IELTS Reading: how we get the answers**

The answers to last week's reading exercise were B, C and F. We get those answers by doing two things:

1. First, we search for keywords in the passage (see the table below).
2. Then we read the relevant part of the passage carefully, checking and comparing with the question until we are sure of the answer.

Keywords in questions	Similar words in the passage
construction	building
more expensive than predicted	costs far exceeding initial estimates
plans	proposals
allow vehicles to use the tunnel	accommodate wheeled vehicles
the tunnel is considered to be	the structure was listed in recognition of
a significant work of architecture	its architectural importance

### **IELTS Reading: more keywords!**

My students and I worked through passage 2 of test 3 in Cambridge IELTS book 9 (page 67). Here's a table of the keywords that gave us the answers:

Keywords in questions	Similar words in the passage
location of the first site	first station to be installed
bringing power back into Britain	power re-imported into Britain
a previous attempt	originally developed then abandoned
tidal power is more reliable than wind	unlike wind, tides are predictable
cut air pollution	reducing emissions
closure of power stations	close power plants
increasing national income	a big export earner to nations
in the vicinity of coastlines	around coasts
can be raised	designed to be lifted
sea life	fish and other creatures
not in danger	unlikely to be at risk

### IELTS Reading:

Here's my keyword table for the general test questions on page 122 of Cambridge book 4:

Keywords in questions	Similar words in the passage
banana cultivation	tropical fruit growing
cattle farming	agriculture... beef and dairy
recreation programs	fitness courses
elderly care	aged support
infant illness	early childhood nursing
beach protection	coastal management
fish farming	marine industry

Notice how the people who write the IELTS reading test use paraphrasing to make the questions. When you see 'keywords' like *cultivation* = *growing*, *elderly* = *aged*, or *beach* = *coastal*, you know you have the answer.

### IELTS Reading: practice test

Find the reading test on page 74-77 in Cambridge IELTS book 4.

Use the key vocabulary in the table below to help you with the test. Don't worry about the time; just try to get all of the answers right.

Keywords in questions	Similar words in the text
taking notes on	written comments on
body language	non-verbal behaviour
social situation	social setting
various methods	several direct methods
necessary	unavoidable
allows claims to be checked	enables claims to be checked
the camera might miss things	the camera cannot be everywhere
comment objectively	make unbiased statements
focus on	deals only with
additional information	supplemented by data
those who speak the language	native speakers of the language

### **IELTS Reading: more keywords**

Here's my keyword table for test 1, passage 2 in Cambridge IELTS 7:

Keywords in questions	Similar words in the passage
ancient water supplies	Roman Empire... pipes and sewers
environmental effects	destroyed river ecosystems
surprising downward trend	unexpectedly... demand has fallen
the need to raise standards	must be built to higher specifications
feeding increasing populations	food production... soaring populations
due primarily to	mainly because of
industrial growth	industrial output... continued to soar
modern technologies	new technologies
domestic water consumption	water in homes

Do you make keyword tables like this when you do IELTS reading tests at home? The more practice you do, the better you'll get at noticing the keywords and finding the answers.

### **IELTS Reading: keyword technique**

What do I mean by the 'keyword' technique?

By 'keywords' I mean: words in the text that have a similar meaning to words in the questions.

The table below shows the keywords that helped my students to find the answers to the test on page 122 of Cambridge IELTS 6.

Keywords in questions	Similar words in the text
conflicting theories	a matter for disagreement
widespread destruction of life	wiped out three quarters of species
existed all over the world	colonised all continents
clear proof	establishing definitely
hunted from the air	catching fish over open water
concrete evidence	proof of this
have been discovered	are known today

**Note:** this comes from a General Training test, but the technique is the same for both general and academic tests.

### **IELTS Reading: keywords (book 9, test 2)**

Every time you do a practice IELTS reading test, remember to keep a record of the 'keywords' that helped you to find the correct answers.

Did you make a keyword table for the exercise in last week's lesson?

Keywords in questions	Similar words in the passage
research completed	measurements have been done
20 per cent	one-fifth
causing significant damage	diminish productivity
by the mid-1980s	in the period 1960-1985
used twice as much fertiliser	fertiliser use doubled
farm diversification increased	farms began to diversify

Here's my first keyword table for Cambridge book 9:



Keywords in questions	Similar words in the passage
national policy initiative	New Zealand strategy
global team effort	international working party
a hypothesis	researchers have suggested
worldwide regulations	international standards
more at risk than others	extremely vulnerable
auditory problems	hearing loss / hearing impairment
current teaching methods	modern teaching practices
cooling systems	air-conditioning units

Even if you don't have a copy of the book, I think you can still learn something from this table. Look at the use of synonyms and similar words (e.g. worldwide / international, regulations / standards, current / modern).

Also, did you know the meanings of words like vulnerable, auditory and impairment? Look these words up in a dictionary, and see if you can use them in your own sentences.

### **IELTS Reading: always review vocabulary**

Even if you find a reading exercise easy, it's always useful to review the key vocabulary that helped you to get the answers.

Here's my review of the vocabulary from last week's exercise:

Keywords in the questions	Similar words in the passage
it is predicted	scientists believe
many lives will be saved	preventing thousands of deaths
prototypes... tested successfully	prototypes already work
motorways... used more efficiently	increasing lane capacity by up to 500pc
the impact on rail and plane	reducing demand for train and plane
drawbacks for certain professions	threaten some existing jobs

### **IELTS Reading: more vocabulary**

The table below shows the key vocabulary for test 4, passage 2 in Cambridge IELTS book 4. Try this test if you have a copy of it. My table should help you to get the correct answers.

Keywords in the questions	Similar words in the passage
investigative work	work of the scientific analyst
give a realistic picture	(opposite of) far from reality
define culture in more than one way	culture includes... also use the term...
history has been documented	historical sources... written records
subdivided for study purposes	broken down into smaller disciplines
evolutionary patterns	characteristics and how they evolved
shape of domestic buildings	why are some dwellings round?
make and use objects	use material culture... make tools

### **IELTS Reading: more keywords**

My students and I did test 1, passage 1 in Cambridge IELTS book 4. The table below shows some of the keywords that helped us to find the correct answers:

Keywords in the questions	Similar words in the passage
ignored by the media	(opposite of) frequent media coverage
children accept ideas	children will have formed opinions
mistaken views	misconceptions
easier to change	accessible to modification
yes/no questions	(opposite of) open-form questions
animals would have nowhere to live	provide animals with habitats
people are responsible	human activities are destroying...
for their continuing existence	to survive
the world gets warmer	global warming

This table shows how important it is to look for similar words in the reading test. It also shows that IELTS reading is a test of your vocabulary knowledge. For example, do you know the difference between 'yes/no questions' and 'open-form questions'? Do you know what 'coverage' and 'misconceptions' mean?

### **IELTS Reading: more keywords**

Here's my keyword table for test 1, passage 3 in Cambridge IELTS 6:



Keywords in questions	Similar words in the text
negative effects on well-being	impact on people's health
respect for... grows	much more credibility
understanding remains limited	still huge gaps in our knowledge
problems	hardships
as a means of sustenance	surviving by
present inhabitants	descendants
life is a struggle	life is harsh
a few	a handful of
to give up	to abandon

**Note:**

Did you study this table carefully? Did you know the words *credibility*, *hardships*, *sustenance*, *struggle*, *harsh*, *abandon*?

**IELTS Reading: easy keywords**

Here are some easy 'keywords' that helped my students to get the answers for the General reading test on page 116 of Cambridge IELTS 6:

Keywords in questions	Similar words in the passage
using the Internet	on-line
someone accompanying	and one companion
receives a discount	half-price seats
can get tickets 45 minutes before	on sale from one hour before
a group of adults	parties of twelve or more
get their money back	refund money

**IELTS Reading: keywords**

Here's my keyword table for last week's true, false, not given exercise:

Keywords in questions	Similar words in the passage
many experts regard Faraday as	historians of science refer to him as
the foremost experimentalist	the best experimentalist
of all time	in the history of science
recommended to him	?? (not given)
a famous chemist	the eminent English chemist
a book based on the chemist's lectures	a book based on notes taken during these lectures

Notice how the questions almost always paraphrase parts of the passage, using synonyms or words with a similar meaning (e.g. regard - refer to, foremost - best, famous - eminent). If you do enough practice, you'll get used to finding and recognising these similar words, and your scores should improve!

### **IELTS Reading: more vocabulary!**

My students and I did test 2, passage 2 in Cambridge IELTS book 8 ('The Little Ice Age'). This is quite a tricky test because one or two of the questions are not in order in the passage. Here are some of the keywords that helped us to get the correct answers:

Keywords in questions	Similar words in the passage
responded to climate change	adapted to global warming
relevance today	help shape the modern world
a thousand years	ten centuries
enough food to last	self-sufficient in grain and livestock
human impact on climate	land clearance released carbon dioxide... triggering global warming
documentation is limited	incomplete written accounts
rather than	far from
some periods of	cycles of
no rain at all	droughts

**Note:** 'far from' can be used to mean 'the opposite of' e.g. "I am far from happy" means "I am not happy at all".

### **IELTS Reading: more key vocabulary**

On Saturday I taught an IELTS reading and writing course here in Manchester. My students and I did reading test 2, passage 3 in Cambridge IELTS book 8.

Here are some of the keywords that helped us to find the correct answers:

Keywords in questions	Similar words in the passage
smell is damaged	smell is impaired
we become aware of	we begin to realise
the importance of	essential role
without realising	not consciously considered
common belief	reason often given
yet to be defined	still to decide
recognise	distinguish
they lack	doesn't exist
do not smell	odourless
not unpleasant	acceptable

### **IELTS Reading: matching similar words**

To find answers in the reading test, look for words or phrases in the passage that are similar to words in the questions.

In the test mentioned below, you need to know that 'exaggerate' is similar to 'overstate', or that 'urgent' is similar to 'pressing'.

The table below shows similar words/phrases for the test on page 24 of Cambridge IELTS book 5.

Keywords in questions	Similar words in the text
pessimistic view of the world	the world seems to be getting worse
linked to	associated with
slow down	accelerating (opposite of 'slow down')
the selection of areas to research	funding goes mainly to areas...
exaggerate their claims	overstate their arguments
meet readers' expectations	provide what the public wants
long-term	extend well into our future
more urgent health problem	most pressing health problem

## **IELTS Reading: vocabulary**

Did you note down the key vocabulary from last week's gap-fill exercise? Here's my keyword table in case you didn't:

Keywords in questions	Similar words in the passage
creative writing	writing good fiction
a new study	new research
parents	mothers and fathers
conducting tests	carried out tests
allowing for	taking into account
genetics	heritability element

## **IELTS Reading: similar words**

Here are some of the key words and phrases that helped my students to get the answers to reading test 4.1 in Cambridge IELTS book 7:

Keywords in questions	Similar words in the text
it is generally believed	the conventional picture is
large numbers of people	thousands of slaves
it was possible to use kites	could have used kites
to raise very heavy stones	to lift massive stones
large pieces of	massive blocks of
use the energy of the wind	harnessing the wind
an object which resembled	artefact looks uncannily like
used for sending messages	using them to deliver messages

*uncannily*: means strangely or extraordinarily

## **IELTS Reading: how questions are made**

The people who create the IELTS reading tests do so by paraphrasing parts of the passage for each question. In other words, they choose a word or phrase in the passage that they want to test you on, and they write a question using words which have a similar meaning.

The table below shows the similar words from last week's exercise:

Keywords in questions	Similar words in the text
most dangerous mountain	climbers have died
an infamous history	since 1935... climbers have died
was conquered	was successfully climbed
finned climbers	threatened to fine
world's most challenging climb	a formidable challenge

**Note:**

The words highlighted in blue were the correct answers because the same meaning was expressed in the passage and the question.

The phrases in black do not express exactly the same meaning (e.g. the fact that climbers have died does not mean that it is the most dangerous mountain). These answers were therefore wrong.

**IELTS Reading: the importance of vocabulary**

IELTS Reading is basically a vocabulary test. If you don't understand words or phrases in the text, it will be difficult to get the right answers.

Try doing the test on page 46-49 of Cambridge IELTS book 4. Here is some of the key vocabulary from this test:

Keywords in questions	Similar words in the text
differed from many Western countries	unusual in the Western world
reluctant to accept	having a conservative attitude to
consulted therapists more often	made more visits to therapists
in increasing numbers	has seen the popularity climb
over the past 20 years	during the past 20 years
had a higher opinion than they do today	public has become disillusioned
retraining	taking courses
long-term medical complaints	chronic illnesses

When I did this test with my students, nobody knew that a "chronic" illness means a "long-term" illness. The words "disillusioned" and "sceptical" also caused problems.

If you didn't know these words, look them up and write them down in your notebook. If you don't have a vocabulary notebook, you should start one now!

### **IELTS Reading: academic and general**

There is a difference between the types of articles used in the academic and general reading tests. However, the types of questions and the techniques for answering them are the same. For this reason, I recommend using both types of exam paper for practice.

The main technique for finding answers in both reading tests is the 'keyword' technique: search in the passage for the key words in each question.

Here's a table of keywords from the GT test in Cambridge book 6, page 118:

Keywords in questions	Similar words in the passage
prioritise your work	tackle the most significant tasks first
create a working space	have a space for studying
catalogue references	log (titles and authors) alphabetically
photocopy important material	copy relevant pages
take a break	a period away from the task
talk about your work	bring your topic up in conversations

### **IELTS Reading: another keyword table**

Here's my keyword table for test 1.3 in Cambridge IELTS book 4:

Keywords in questions	Similar words in the passage
can recognise perspective	can appreciate perspective
surprised	taken aback
representing movement	show motion
understanding of symbols representing movement	figured out meanings for each line of motion
abstract shapes	shapes that do not directly represent their meaning
assigned a circle to 'deep'	linked deep to circle
similar choices	choices closely resembled
comprehend visual metaphors	interpret abstract shapes



This test also contains some tricky words to describe shapes and movement. Look them up in a dictionary if you don't understand them. Line shapes: curved, wavy, bent, dashed. Movement: spinning, wobbling, jerking.

### **IELTS Reading: more keywords**

Last week I did a reading test from Cambridge IELTS 7 (page 48-52) with one of my classes. Here is some of the vocabulary that helped us to get the answers:

Keywords in questions	Similar words in the passage
identifying problems	problems had to be understood
co-operation of district officials	support of district authorities
a future model	a reference for future work
almost inaccessible	virtually totally isolated
20%... outside the local area	80% was within the locality
breakdown of buses and trucks	motorised vehicles broke down
isolation was no longer a problem	accessible throughout the year

The fifth row of the above table is interesting: "20% outside the local area" means the same as "80% was within the local area".

Another question confused some of my students: If a survey showed that "households spent seven hours a day on transporting themselves and their goods", does this mean that it was "a survey of household expenditure on transport"?

### **IELTS Reading: keywords**

Here's a table showing the keywords that helped us to get the correct answers to last week's Yes, No, Not Given exercise.

Keywords in questions	Similar words in the text
the majority of	most of
on a daily basis	each day
conscious decisions	well-considered decision making
saving money	whether we save or spend
at least 40 percent	40 percent or more
the things we do	the actions people performed

Remember: you can only be sure that you have the correct answer when you can point to specific words in the passage that have a similar meaning to the words in the question.

### **IELTS Reading: keyword table**

The table below shows some of the keywords that help you to find the answers to test 4, passage 1 in Cambridge IELTS book 6.

If you have book 6, try the test using the table to help you.

Keywords in questions	Similar words in the text
financial incentives	give \$200
who is responsible?	are doctors to blame?
not persuaded	not influenced
open to criticism	highly criticised
information is of little use	(opposite of) much-needed information
it is legitimate to make money	have every right to make a profit
drug companies	pharmaceutical companies

### **IELTS Reading: keywords**

Vocabulary is the key to doing well in IELTS Reading. Usually there are "keywords" in the questions that are similar to the words you need to find in the text. For example, if the text contains the word "global", the question might use the word "international".

The table below shows keywords for Test 4 in Cambridge IELTS book 4:

Keywords in questions	Similar words in the text
about 1900	the early years of the twentieth century
records date from	began keeping records
intensive burst of energy	explosive release of energy
growing international importance	increasing global participation
recognised at a younger age	identified early
aims to develop power	focuses on increasing power
inadequate diet	deficiencies in minerals
links to	can lead to
current knowledge is basic	our understanding is fundamental



Try making your own keyword tables for other practice tests. It's a good way to improve your vocabulary, and it will help you to see how IELTS reading questions are made.

### **IELTS Reading: keywords**

Here's a table showing the key vocabulary from last week's reading exercise. I recommend making a keyword table every time you practise a reading test.

Keywords in questions	Similar words in the text
by the beginning of the 16th century	by 1500
in use	in operation
in several different countries	throughout Western Europe
rise in the number of	sharp increase in
people who could read and write	literacy
negative effect on middle classes	(opposite of) bolstered the middle class

*bolster (verb) = support or strengthen*

### **IELTS Reading: keyword tables**

When I do reading tests with my students, we always make a 'keyword table' with the words and phrases that helped us to get the answers.

Here's our table for test 1, passage 1 in Cambridge IELTS book 6:

Keywords in questions	Similar words in the text
exchange of expertise between sports	applying skills learnt in one sport to others
a reason for narrowing the scope of research	we can't waste time looking at questions that don't help performance
ideas have been reproduced	other countries copying
obstacles to achievement	factor that might have an impact on ability
before an event	before a championship
how performance requirements are calculated	they prepare a model based on what they expect will be the winning times
cameras - used by Australians	Australian competitions - digital cameras
sensors will be used in future	they are developing sensors
protein tests are currently used	developed a test that measures protein

Don't just test yourself. Study the answers, your mistakes, and the key vocabulary whenever you do a reading test. Try making a keyword table.

### **IELTS Reading: look for keywords**

Imagine the question asks about "longer days". If you read the text and find "increasing day lengths", you know you have found the answer.

In other words, the technique for finding answers in the IELTS Reading test is to look for keywords (similar words in the questions and in the text).

The table below shows keywords that helped my students to find the answers for one section of a reading test (Cambridge IELTS 5, page 94-97).

Keywords in questions	Similar words in the text
there is plenty of scientific evidence	the amount of experimental evidence is considerable
types of bird	species of bird
scientists have yet to determine	it is not yet known
the trigger for	the cue for
temperatures are unpredictable	temperatures fluctuate greatly
longer days	increasing day lengths
the availability of food	adequate food resources
depend on insects	require fertilisation by insects
there is no limit	never reach a maximum

Did you know words like considerable, trigger, cue or adequate? If you don't know the vocabulary, it's very difficult to get the right answer.

### **IELTS Reading: quite an easy one!**

Last week my students and I looked at Cambridge IELTS 4 (test 1, passage 2). This is quite an easy test, and most of my students got the answers right.

The table below shows some of the key vocabulary that helped us to get the correct answers.

Keywords in questions	Similar words in the text
nerves linked to	nerves serving
underdeveloped	rudimentary
vision is exceptional	extremely keen vision
hearing	acoustic sense
involved in mating	part of the courtship ritual
follow	track

If you have book 4, try doing this test. Hopefully you'll find it quite easy too.

### **IELTS Reading: practice test**

Below I've made a table of key vocabulary from a reading test in Cambridge IELTS Book 1 (page 40-43).

Try doing the test using the vocabulary table below to help you.

Keywords in questions	Similar words in the text
when they first developed language	evolution of speech
society is prejudiced against left-handed people	in a world designed to suit right-handed people
boys are more likely to be left-handed	there are more left-handed males than females
after a stroke	if a person is brain-damaged
the left side of the brain	the left hemisphere
the two sides of the brain develop different functions	left-right asymmetry exists
a common feature	systematic

### **IELTS Reading: practice test**

Try doing the test on page 50-53 in Cambridge IELTS book 4.

Follow this advice for the 3 question sections:

1. **Which paragraph contains:** Always do these questions last. Do the other question sections first to become familiar with the text.
2. **Which ideas are mentioned:** Remember, you are looking for ideas that are *mentioned in the text*, not ideas that are true.

**3.Match the names:** This is a perfect task for scanning. Scan quickly to find and underline the names.

Here is the key vocabulary that will help you to find the answers:

Keywords in questions	Similar words in the text
unusual connections in the brain	link-ups between brain areas that might not normally communicate
recording how much time	if you plot the amount of time
young animal	a juvenile
mental activities	cognitive involvement
rehearsal for adult activities	develop the skills they will need to hunt, mate and socialise as adults
build up strength	get in shape
adulthood	adult life
a specific substance	a particular chemical
input concerning physical surroundings	environmental data
a wide range of activities	jumping rapidly between activities

Use the table below to help you with the test on page 60-63 of Cambridge IELTS book 1 (buy or borrow this book, or look for it on the Internet).

Keywords in questions	Similar words in the text
traditional	historically
lexicographical methods	the compiling of dictionaries
alternative expressions	related phrases
accurate word frequency counts	find out how frequently it is used
non-verbal	pauses and noises
a cooperative project	an initiative carried out by several groups
the portrayal of feelings	to convey emotion

### **IELTS Reading: test practice**

A student recently asked me about the reading test on page 40 of Cambridge IELTS book 6. Find a copy of this test, and use the vocabulary in the table below to help you find the answers.

For the 'paragraph headings' question, you should find it easier to start with the shortest paragraphs.

Keywords in questions	Similar words in the text
people power	local pressure groups
increases in travelling time	commuting times far higher
higher incomes	wealthier
avoiding an overcrowded centre	pushing everyone into the city centre was not the best approach
benefits of working together	valuable to place people working in related fields together
improve the quality of life	creating a better place to live
only averagely good	reasonable but not special

**Note:** "Commuting" means travelling (into a city) to work. "Overcrowded" means there are too many people in one place.