

IELTS™

IELTS Reading



www.takeielts.org/teachielts

Programme

1. Overview of IELTS
2. The reading component
 - question types
 - main problems & solutions
3. Reading strategies
4. Reading skills
5. Dealing with different question types
6. Review and resources

IELTS Reading

- Lasts 60 minutes (there is no extra time to transfer answers to answer sheet)
- 3 texts: total of between 2150 to 2750 words
- Texts do not require specialist knowledge
- Texts are of different levels of difficulty
- 40 questions in total (number and type of questions per text varies)

Question types

Fill in gaps in text or tables

Matching

Complete sentences

Short answers to open questions

Multiple choice

True, false, not given / Yes, no, not given

Choosing headings

Categorising/Classifying/Matching features

Labelling

IELTS™

Problems?

Timing

Understanding the question

Solutions?

Develop good reading skills

Develop good question-answering strategies

Strategies and skills – good or bad?

- 1 Read the text very carefully in order to understand it entirely. B
- 2 Look quickly at the text to get an overview of format – headings, diagrams etc. G
- 3 Read a text very quickly the first time to get the main ideas. G
- 4 Read the questions first to get an idea of what to look for in the text. G/B
- 5 In general, spend about 1 minute on each question. G
- 6 Read each question or group of questions carefully, then scan text to find possible answers. G
- 7 Underline and mark the text e.g. question numbers against text to check later G
- 8 Follow the instructions. G
- 9 If you have difficulty with a question, re-read the passage as often as necessary to find the answer. B
- 10 It is not necessary to stick to the time limits recommended at the start of each section. B
- 11 If you are not sure of an answer, write it down in such a way you remember to check it later. G
- 12 If you think a particular word is important, try to guess its meaning from the context. G
- 13 If you are not sure which answer is correct (A, B, C or D / T, F, NG), guess. G
- 14 It is better to complete the test by rushing over some difficult questions, than not to finish the test. G

Reading sub-skills

SURVEYING

Looking at a text very quickly before reading to get an idea of lay-out: title, pictures, graphs, headings which helps with **PREDICTION**

SKIMMING

Reading a text very quickly to get the general understanding and to activate your schematic knowledge.

SCANNING

Reading a text with the specific purpose of extracting information such as numbers, facts, words etc.

READING FOR DETAIL / CLOSE READING

Reading a text in order to understand the detailed meaning.

INFERRING MEANING

Reading a text in order to discover the writer's opinions or feelings from the language and way it has been expressed or presented.

DEDUCING MEANING

Reading a text and working out the meaning of vocabulary from the surrounding context and information given.

Reading sub-skills

SURVEYING/SKIMMING

Having looked at the title, the figure and the topic sentence of each paragraph, test-takers know:

- the main idea of passage
- where particular information is likely to be

This makes answering subsequent questions much quicker.

Reading sub-skills

PREDICTION AND QUESTION ANALYSIS

The deathwatch beetle is found most often in ...**5**... and ...**6**...
They infest damp-prone timber which has been affected ...**7**...
Adults do not feed, so they survive on ...**8**... and live for only
two or three months. The larvae, on the other hand, live for up
to ...**9**..., feeding on the timbers during that time. They pupate
in ...**10**... but the adult does not emerge until the following
spring.

Question type: gap-filling / sentence completion

Read the instructions carefully

The question states the **number** of words to be used (hyphenated words count as one word, contracted words aren't tested).

The question states that the words must come from the text. Do **not** use own words.

Question type: matching features

Read through the items

Read through match alternatives. What type of information are you looking for? e.g. nationalities/countries

Scan the text and underline the items.

Read text around each item for the type of information you need.

Compare the information with the alternatives. If it matches, write in the answer.

If there is no match, go back to context. Look for negatives or references to previous or following information.

Question type: matching headings

It is assumed that students have surveyed, predicted etc.

- Read through the headings and underline key words
- Identify topic sentences in each paragraph
- Match key words with key words in topic sentences
- If necessary, choose two headings and then quickly go back to check.

Example

Topic sentence section A

The **role of governments in environmental management** is difficult but inescapable.

Heading v

Governments and management of the environment

Question type: Y/N/NG and T/F/NG

It is important to explain the difference between 'no' and 'not given' (or 'false' and 'not given'). In the first variation of the task, 'no' means that the opinions or claims of the writer explicitly disagree with the statement – i.e., the writer somewhere expresses a view or makes a claim which is opposite to the one given in the question; 'not given' means that the view or claim or statement is neither confirmed nor contradicted.

It is important to understand that any knowledge the students have from outside the passage should not play a part when deciding on their answers.

Turn the statement into a question

Underline the key words and think about possible synonyms

Skim the appropriate section

Scan to find the key words or synonyms

Read closely to infer meaning (look out for modals and negatives)

Question type: multiple choice

The order of the questions is the same as the order the information appears in the text.

Read through the possibilities and make predictions based on logic and any background knowledge you may have.

Underline the key words.

Go to the appropriate part of the text and underline/note key words.

Close read the text to find the best match.

If the answer is not immediately apparent, at least put a question mark or note against any distractors that are clearly incorrect.

If time, return to the question.

If the worst comes to the worst, guess between the remaining possibilities. There is no negative marking.

Multiple choice

- a) Read the multiple choice questions quickly and make any predictions you can based on logic and any background knowledge you have.
- b) Underline the key words in the answers.

Operant Conditioning

1. **Operant conditioning** holds that:

- A human **behaviour** is primarily stimulus led.
- B humans are able to affect the environment around them.
- C human behaviour is basically simple and rudimentary.
- D stimuli create new pathways in the brain.

Reading Top Tips

- ✓ Survey and skim the text to get main idea – underline topic sentences, have awareness of what each paragraph is about
- ✓ Analyse questions – underline key words
- ✓ Find answers, considering synonyms, put (possible) answers directly on answer sheet
- ✓ Check instructions followed
- ✓ Time management – don't spend more than 20 minutes on a passage
- ✓ Don't leave a question unanswered. Guess – there is no negative marking