

# IELTS

## ACADEMIC READING GUIDE

TIPS BOOKLET



**IELTS buddy**

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## READING TEST ONE TIPS

### Reading Passage 1 (Test 1) – Korean High Schools

#### Questions 1-7

##### Matching Headings

Basically, with this type of question, you are being tested on your ability to identify the *main idea* of a paragraph.

Here are some tips on how to approach this type of question:

#### MATCHING HEADINGS TIPS

- a) *Look at the first paragraph (in this case A). Read the topic sentence and the sentence after that carefully as the main idea is often here. Underline any key words in these first two sentences to help you identify them when you look back at the questions.*
- b) *However, remember the main idea is not always in the topic sentence or second sentence. So you should skim through the rest of the paragraph to make sure you fully understand what it is about.*
- c) *When you think you have a good idea of what the central idea of the paragraph is, go back to the headings and look through them one by one.*
- d) *If you are sure one particular heading fits, then write that number e.g. iv, next to **the paragraph** in the reading passage and put an X at the end of **the heading** to show you have used it (don't cross it out as you may need to look at it again if you find out later you made an error).*
- e) *You may need to quickly look back at the paragraph again to confirm what you are thinking. Maybe there are a couple of headings you think it could be? Then write both those numbers e.g. iv, vii, next to the paragraph in the reading passage, and put an X by each of those headings. If you decide later that one of those headings fits another heading better then you can cross it out (if at the end you are just not sure which it is then you will just need to guess and put the one you think fits best).*
- f) *Then go to the next paragraph, in this case C (as B has been done), and follow the same procedure – look through the headings, decide which fits, and put the number next to the paragraph in the reading. When you've finished them all you can transfer your answers to the answer sheet.*

g) *DO NOT* look at each heading in turn then go through the reading to find the paragraph. Some students are told to do this, but this means you will have to keep looking through all the paragraphs which will take longer. Also, remember some of the headings don't have a paragraph, so again you will be wasting your time if you look for an answer (paragraph) for them when there isn't one.

So if you have some questions like this it is not a good idea to read the whole reading then tackle the questions, as you'll likely have to then read the whole thing twice as you won't remember what was in each paragraph.

This is why it is a good idea to look at the questions first before reading the whole passage.

### Questions 8-13

#### True, False, Not Given

In this type of question you are given a set of statements and you have to decide if it agrees with what is in the text (*True*), disagrees (*False*) or we cannot know from looking at the text (*Not given*).

Do the following to answer these questions:

#### TRUE / FALSE / NOT GIVEN TIPS

- a) *In the question stem, underline any key words that will help you find out where the information is in the text. For example, the first question is connected to 'sleep', which is a word you should underline.*
- b) *Scan through the text to see where you first see the word(s) you have underlined, in this case 'sleep'.*
- c) *Read that part of the text very carefully and see if it agrees or disagrees with the statement.*
- d) *If you don't know if it agrees or disagrees, then it will be Not Given.*
- e) *Go onto the next question – the questions will follow on in the same order as the text.*

### Not Given Questions

Students have particular difficulty with the 'Not Given' questions.

Here are some key points to bear in mind:

- Don't spend a lot of time trying to find the answer – if you can't find it then put 'Not Given'. You can't afford to waste time in the reading test.
- Don't assume an answer is going to be 'True' or 'False' just because you can see the words from the question in the text. Usually all the words for either T, F or NG will be in the text, it could still be NG – it just means the full answer to the question is not there.
- You cannot add information that you think is probably true because you have guessed or inferred it (or it seems obvious) from what you read. The information must actually *be there*. If not, it is NG.

Here is an example

**Text from a reading:**

- Full-time employees are entitled to 12 months maternity, paternity and adoption leave.

**True**

- *A full-time employee who takes a year off to have a baby can return to the same employer.*

This says the same thing as the question so it is True. 12 months maternity, paternity and adoption leave = a year off to have a baby

You are not assuming or guessing anything. It is a fact that they can go back to the same employer – a right to 'leave' means you can take time off and return.

**False**

- *Full-time employees have no rights to take maternity, paternity and adoption related leave.*

'No rights' is the opposite to 'entitled' so it is false.

**Not Given**

- *Part-time employees are not entitled to any unpaid maternity, paternity and adoption leave*

You may be tempted to think this is True. Surely if full-time employees are entitled to 12 months leave then part-timers are not?

The statement though says they are not entitled to *any* unpaid leave. It could be true but we don't know. It is possible that they get 3 months unpaid leave. If you write True you will be guessing or making an assumption.

## Reading Passage 2 (Test 1) – The Depletion and Protection of Natural Resources

### Questions 14-18

#### Locating Information

In this type of question you have to locate information in sections or paragraphs of the reading passage. You need to look for specific details rather than main ideas of whole paragraphs. It will be things such as examples and explanations.

Note that the answers **are not** in the same order as the information in the text. So you won't find question one at the beginning, then question two after that etc. Two pieces of information could also be in the same paragraph.

### LOCATING INFORMATION TIPS

a) *Underline key words in the question stems. For example:*

*14 a definition of sustainable development*

*15 an explanation of how farming practices are negatively affecting natural resources*

*16 the importance of having legislation at all levels to preserve natural resources*

*17 reasons why there is international controversy over natural resource allocation*

*18 the possible impacts of resource depletion on people's health*

b) *Then use these words to skim the text to find information related to these words. Remember synonyms are often used so you may not find those exact words. For example, for number 15, if you see another word related to farming, such as agriculture, then check to see if that is the answer. Likewise, if you see a word related to legislation such as law, then read that part. In 18, the word health may not be stated but skim for a part where health is discussed.*

c) *When you have found a part that you think may be correct, read it through more carefully to see if it matches.*

## Questions 19-22

### Summary (no bank)

In this type of question there is no bank, which means you are not given a list of words to fit in the gaps. You have to find them yourself in the text and decide which fit.

The summary usually relates to one specific part of the text, within one or two paragraphs. The summary will follow the same order as the text it is taken from.

You should not make any change to the word forms of the words you choose from the text.

### SUMMARY (NO BANK) TIPS

- a) *Read the summary.*
- b) *Scan the text to find out which part of the text it relates to. Use key words in the summary to locate the right section e.g. UN's World Charter.*
- c) *Then read the sentence carefully with the gap and refer back to the text to compare the sentences and identify which word is missing.*

## Questions 23-36

### Gap Fill

In this type of question you have to find words from the text that will fit in the gaps. Don't change the form of the words that you take from the reading.

The questions will follow the same order as the text.

### GAP FILL TIPS

- a) *Read the first question and underline key words. For example, in the first one underline localised resources.*
- b) *Use the word you have underlined to scan through the text to find the part it refers to.*
- c) *Think about what type of information you need. For instance, in question 23 you are looking for something that is the opposite of "localised resources".*
- d) *Write the exact word or words in the gap (make sure you don't use more words that you are allowed).*
- e) *Do the same for the remaining questions.*

## Reading Passage 3 (Test 1) – Crime Fiction

### Questions 27-30

#### Multiple Choice Questions

In this type of task, you are given a set of statements, and each one has four possible answers connected to it. Only one is correct and you have to choose which one.

As in all cases, always read the instructions carefully as there are different types of multiple choice questions. In some you may choose two or three of a list of options.

In this case, you are given four options in each question and you have to choose only one from each set.

The questions can be written in two ways. You may be asked a question:

Which of the following phrases best describes the main aim of Reading Passage 3?

- A *To warn against the dangers of letting child labour continue*
- B *To describe the facts and issues around child labour in the past and the modern day*
- C *To track the history of child labour*
- D *To explain the problems of and solutions to child labour*

Or you may have to finish a statement:

William Somerset Maugham's (1874–1966) novella *Up at the Villa*

- A *Is usually considered a crime novel*
- B *Is about a woman who meets a stranger who then kills himself*
- C *Involves a woman who causes a scandal by disposing of a dead body*
- D *Is one of many crime novels written by the author*

Many of the words and phrases you see in the choices will be in the reading. That is why it can be tricky to find the answer and why you may pick the wrong one.

So you have to read it carefully to find which is right.

Just because you find some matching words for one of the choices, don't assume it is the answer – read the context to see if it is.

What you are reading may actually have a different meaning to a choice you are looking at.

Also, sometimes the information for a choice is not in there. If you are guessing, then it is the wrong answer. You can't assume anything. The answer should be there.

Here is an example. Cover up the explanations below. Then take a look and choose an answer:

*Educating Psyche* by Bernie Neville is a book which looks at radical new approaches to learning, describing the effects of emotion, imagination and the unconscious on learning. One theory discussed in the book is that proposed by George Lozanov, which focuses on the power of suggestion.

The book *Educating Psyche* is mainly concerned with

- A the power of suggestion in learning.
- B a particular technique for learning based on emotions.
- C the effects of emotion on the imagination and the unconscious.
- D ways of learning which are not traditional.

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A – You may think it is this one because the words match – “*power of suggestion*” – in the book and the choice.

But the question stem asks what the book is *mainly* concerned with (which means the *whole* book). The power of suggestion is related to just *one theory* in the book, not the whole book.

B – Again this has words from the text – “*learning*”, and “*emotions*” – and you may think that “*radical new approaches*” means the same as “*particular technique*”.

However they don't really have the same meaning. Also, the sentence is not saying the same thing. The book *describes* the *effects* of *emotions*, *imagination* and the *unconscious*, but the choice just mentions *emotions* and says it is *based* on them.

C – You may choose this one if your understanding of grammar is poor. Describing *the effects of emotions, imagination and the unconscious* (a list of 3 things) is not the same as *the effects of emotions on imagination and the unconscious*

D – This is in fact the correct answer. “*...are not traditional*” means the same as “*radical new*” and “*approaches to learning*” is the same as “*ways of learning*”.

*This should make it clear that you have to read the text very carefully otherwise you may be tricked into choosing the wrong answer.*

Do the following steps:

### MULTIPLE CHOICE TIPS

- a) *Read the question stem.*
- b) *Underline any key words, such as proper nouns e.g. names, places, which will help you to locate the answer.*
- c) *Scan the text to find the part which is being referred to and read it carefully.*
- d) *Then go back and look at the four options.*
- e) *Don't choose an answer just because it looks similar in words to a part in the text – the meaning is important.*
- f) *If you are making an assumption and the answer is not actually there as a choice, it will be wrong – the information must be there*
- g) *Mark in the text where you found the answer, because the questions will follow the same order as the text, so you know that the answer to the next question will be after the previous one you have just answered.*

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*So for example, in the first one, you may underline the following*

- 27 William Somerset Maugham's (1874–1966) novella *Up at the Villa*
- 28 Bret Easton Ellis's seminal novel *American Psycho*
- 29 The housewife in James M Cain's novel *Mildred Pierce*
- 30 The film version of Mildred Pierce

*This will help you find the information quickly in the text. Of course you could look for the names of the books as well.*

### Questions 31-36

#### *Yes, No, Not Given*

These are very similar to the *True, False Not Given* questions. Usually in text books, the difference between these two types of questions is explained as *Yes, No, Not Given* being about the *opinions* of the author, and *True, False, Not Given* being factual information.

This may generally be the case but in reality it often hard to see the difference, and it really is of little consequence. Both need to be approached in the same way i.e. identifying if the information in the statement agrees or is true according to the text, is false or does not agree, or is not given.

So as with the True / False Questions, do the following:

### YES / NO / NOT GIVEN QUESTION TIPS

- a) *In the question stem, underline any key words that will help you find out where the information is in the text. For example, the first question is about distinguishing between different types of fiction. You should underline different and types of fiction.*
- b) *Scan through the text to see where you first see the word(s) you have underlined.*
- c) *Read that part of the text carefully and see if it agrees (Yes) with what the writer states or disagrees (No) according to the text.*
- d) *If you don't know then it will be Not Given.*
- e) *Go onto the next question – the questions will follow on in the same order as the text.*

### Questions 37-40

#### Summary (with bank)

In this type of summary you are given a list of words and you need to decide which one will fit in the gap. Unlike the summary completion in reading 1, where you have to choose a word from the actual text, you are given a bank of words to choose from. It is possible that the order is not the same as in the text.

This can be quite difficult because the word that fits in the gap may not be exactly the same as it was in the passage. It may be a different form e.g. an adverb in the passage but you need to use the noun form in the gap. It could be the same as in the passage however. Either way, it will be in the list.

Also, several words may fit grammatically, so you have to look at the text to identify which word is correct.

*See next page for tips*

## SUMMARY WITH BANK TIPS

- a) *Read through the summary so you can then work out which part of the reading passage it relates to. It may relate to two or three paragraphs from the text. Proper nouns such as 'Arthur Alexander Gordon Clark' will help you find where to begin. So scan the text for this word.*
- b) *You will probably have to keep referring back and forward between the questions and the passage in order to work out which word is correct.*
- c) *When you think you have identified the correct word, check that it fits grammatically i.e. should it be a noun, adjective, verb etc. For example, if there is an article such as a/an or the then you know you are looking for a noun. You can therefore exclude any words that are not nouns from the list when you are deciding.*

## READING TEST TWO TIPS

### Reading Passage 1 (Test 2) – Middle Eastern Music

#### Questions 1-5

##### *True, False, Not Given*

See tips from Test 1, reading passages 1 and 3 (p. 3 & 9)

#### Questions 6-10

##### *Classification*

In this type of task you have to match features to a set of more general categories.

The questions may not be in the same order as the text because you may have to relate information from different sections.

### CLASSIFICATION TIPS

- a) *Note the categories that you are given. In this case it is three: String instruments, Percussion instruments and Wind instruments – the last category is a mix of two of these.*
- b) *Scan the text and identify the paragraphs that refer to these categories.*
- c) *Write the category e.g. “String Instr” next to the paragraph so you will know where it is when you come to look at the questions.*
- d) *Look at the first question, then skim through the paragraphs to see which category refers to the feature, or which two categories in the case of D. So in question 6, you will be looking for references to “Turkey”.*
- e) *Do the same for the remaining questions.*

#### Questions 11-13

##### *Multiple Choice*

See tips from Test 1, reading passage 3 (p. 7)

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## Reading Passage 2 (Test 2) – Australian Culture

### Questions 14-17

#### Locating information

See tips from Test 1, reading passage 2 (p. 5)

### Questions 18-22

#### Note completion

This type of task tests your understanding of how a text is organized as the notes you are provided with will reflect different sections of the text.

The notes could be organised in various ways, such as with headings, sub-headings, numbered sections, indentations.

### NOTE COMPLETION TIPS

- a) *Look at the way the notes are organised*
  - i *What are the sub-headings?*
  - ii *How many points are under each?*
- b) *Make a note of the first sub-heading, which in this case is mate-ship.*
- c) *Use this word to locate where the information about this is in the text.*
- d) *Then use any keywords from the sub-points to locate the detail in the section. For example, the first sub-point refers to “equality”. Scan through the paragraph(s) that are about “mate-ship” and look for the part about “equality”.*
- e) *Do this for the rest of the questions.*
- f) *Remember to always be aware of synonyms. Some of the words given in the summary that you use to locate information could be synonyms of those in the text.*

### Questions 23-26

#### Yes, No, Not Given

See tips from Test 1, reading passages 1 and 3 (p. 3 & 9)

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## Reading Passage 3 (Test 2) – Child Labour

### Questions 27-31

#### *Matching Headings (to sections)*

This section is similar to selecting a heading for a paragraph except you have a section (with one or more paragraphs) rather than a single paragraph.

For this types of question you should follow the same strategies as for selecting headings to paragraphs i.e. read through the first section then look through the headings and mark on which heading (or two headings) could fit (you can delete one later).

In similarity to the ‘paragraph to headings’ type question, each section should have a central or main idea, and you have to select which one best fits that from the headings.

Check test 1, reading passage 1 (p. 2) for more tips.

### Questions 32-35

#### *True, False, Not Given*

See tips from Test 1, reading passages 1 and 3 (p. 3 & 9)

### Questions 36-39

#### *Sentence Completion*

In these questions you need to find the correct sentence in the box to complete the four sentences you are given in the stem.

These questions will not necessarily follow the same order as the text, though they may do.

#### **SENTENCE COMPLETION TIPS**

- a) *Look at the first question. Note the key words in the question, and use them to scan the text to find the section of the text that discusses this.*
- b) *Then read the sentence (and a few of the sentences around that sentence) and check you understand the meaning of what is being said in the text.*
- c) *Then go back to the options, read them through, and select which one matches what you have just read. Remember that the options will be paraphrases of the main text so you will need to look for synonyms.*
- d) *Do the same with the other questions.*

## Question 40

### Multiple Choice - Finding the Main Idea

This is a multiple choice, but for this question you need to work out the main point of the *whole reading* rather than just parts of a paragraph.

By this point you should have looked at the reading quite a few times as you answered the other questions.

So you should have a fairly good idea of what point the author wanted to make.

### FINDING THE MAIN IDEA OF A TEXT TIPS

- a) *Be careful not to pick something that just describes a PART of the reading. It needs to be the sentence that encapsulates the WHOLE passage.*

*For example, the first one is:*

*To warn against the dangers of letting child labour continue*

- b) *Is the whole reading about warnings of the dangers of child labour? If quite a lot of it is not, then it will not likely be the right answer.*
- c) *DO NOT choose an option which is the main idea of one paragraph or part of the text.*

## READING TEST THREE TIPS

### Reading Passage 1 (Test 3) – Ecosystems

#### Questions 1-5

##### *Multiple Choice*

See tips from Test 1, Reading Passage 3 (p. 7)

#### Questions 6-13

##### *Yes, No, Not Given*

See tips from Test 1, reading passages 1 and 3 (p. 3 & 9)

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### Reading Passage 2 (Test 3) – Finger Printing

#### Questions 14-19

##### *Matching Headings*

See tips from Test 1, reading passage 1 (p. 2)

#### Questions 20-26

##### *Classification*

This is the same as Test 2, reading passage 1 (p. 12).

In this type of task you have to match features to a set of more general categories.

In the previous test, you had to match features to types of musical instrument. In this case you have to match the statement to the person or organisation that made the statement.

This type of question is a good example of why you should look at the questions before you read the text in detail. If you look at this question, you can see that you have to match statements to names. This tells you that you should highlight any names as you read the text as you will have to refer back to those names afterwards.

As you can see there are more questions that names, which means that some of the statements will be from the same person / organisation.

The questions may not be in the same order as the text.

## CLASSIFICATION TIPS

- a) *Note the categories that you are given. In this case it is the list of people and organisations given to you in the box.*
- b) *Scan the text and identify the paragraphs or parts of each paragraph that refer to these categories.*
- c) *Make a note next to the paragraph (or highlight the name/organisation in the paragraph) so you can easily find the paragraph again.*
- d) *Look at the first question, then skim through the names you have highlighted to see which person made the statement.*
- e) *Do the same for the remaining questions.*

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### Reading Passage 3 (Test 3) – A Balanced Diet

#### Questions 27-32

##### *Gap Fill*

See tips from Test 1, reading passage 2 (p. 6).

#### Questions 33-40

##### *Table Completion (with headings)*

In this type of task you are given a table and you have to complete the gaps.

See next page for Table Completion Tips:

## TABLE COMPLETION TIPS

- a) *Don't change the words from the words in the text. Use the exact ones.*
- b) *Read the information at the top and the side of the table in order to identify the type of information that you are looking for*
- c) *Skim the text to identify which part of the text the table refers to. It could be a part of the text but it could be the whole reading. In this case, it is the whole reading.*
- d) *Note and highlight which paragraph refers to the categories in the left column.*
- e) *Look at the first question and then go the part that you identified before – in this case the section about carbohydrates and fibre.*
- f) *Then read that section in more detail to locate the missing information.*

## READING TEST FOUR TIPS

### Reading Passage 1 (Test 4) – Aboriginal Tribes

#### Questions 1-7

##### *Matching Headings*

See tips from Test 1, reading passage 1 (p. 2)

#### Questions 8-11

##### *Table Completion / Cause and Effect*

This type of task was discussed in Test 3, reading passage 3, but it is slightly different and needs a different approach.

Unlike the other one, you'll see there are no headings to scan to help you find the information. The table is based around causes and effects that are taken from the reading.

Instead of using the headings to find the answers, you will need to underline key words from each cause or effect given, and use those to scan the text to find the answers.

Having knowledge of cause and effect language here will help you to identify the causes and effects – words such as *result of*, *because (of)*, *due to*, *leads to*. Remember the effect can come before the cause.

#### **TABLE COMPLETION / CAUSE AND EFFECT TIPS**

- a) *Read the first cause / effect.*
- b) *Underline any key words. If there are nouns or proper noun, underline these. So in this case, Bass Strait.*
- c) *When you identify the part of the passage it refers to, read it carefully and identify what the effect / cause is (you will need to understand cause and effect language to do this).*
- d) *It may not be in the same order as the reading. In other words, the effect could come before the cause, so read it carefully.*

#### Questions 12-13

##### *Multiple Choice*

See tips from Test 1, reading passage 3 (p. 7)

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## Reading Passage 2 (Test 4) – Conservation of the Pandas

### Questions 14-17

#### *Sentence Completion*

See tips from Test 2, reading passage 3 (p. 14)

### Question 18-22

#### *Flow Chart*

If a text has a description of a process, or it explain how something changes over time, you may have to complete a summary that is set out as a flow chart.

A flow chart is a summary of the main stages in a process or sequence of events and arrows are used to identify each stage of the process.

It follows in time order. Use the words exactly as they are in the reading.

The flow chart in this case refers to only one paragraph in the text, but it could be more than one.

#### **FLOW CHART TIPS**

- a) *Skim though the stages of the process, noting some key words, and then look back at the text to identify which section it comes from. You may get the answer to this from the title. In this case is it about poaching, so look for the section of the text which refers to this.*
- b) *Look at the first question. What could foreigners not do after the 1930s? Use key words in the text to find this.*
- c) *Read this part of the text carefully and select the right word(s) to go into the gap.*

### Questions 23-26

#### *True, False, Not Given*

See tips from Test 1, reading passages 1 and 3 (p. 3 & 9)

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## Reading Passage 3 (Test 4) – Human Insect Eating

### Questions 27-33

#### Short Answer

In this type of question you have to find the right information in the text to answer the question. You are usually looking for some kind of factual information.

#### SHORT ANSWER TIPS

- a) *The questions will be in the same order as the text.*
- b) *Look at the first question and decide what you are looking for i.e. a person, place, number, country etc.*
- c) *Underline key words in the question that will help you to find the information. For example, in the first one you would underline Entomophagy. You will see that this is referred to in the second paragraph, so the information should be here.*
- d) *Skim through this paragraph to find out where it states who it refers to.*
- e) *Do the same for the remaining questions.*

### Questions 34-39

#### Summary (no bank)

See tips from Test 1, reading passage 2 (p. 6)

### Questions 40

#### Multiple Choice - Finding the Main Idea

See tips from Test 2, reading passage 3 (p. 15)