



## WHAT IS THE IELTS READING AND ITS TYPES OF QUESTIONS

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**Annotation:** *This article explains what is the academic reading, its purposes and challenges as well as the process and evaluation of it. Moreover it introduces with the 14 types of IELTS Reading questions and gives some strategies and instructions to solve them correctly and fastly.*

**Key words:** *IELTS academic reading, skimming, scanning, strategies, evolution, procedure, matching heading, gap filling, purpose, challenges, comprehension, multiple choice, True/False/Not given, analysis, procedure, assessment, classification, time management, reviews.*

### **Main purpose of IELTS Reading?**

The main goal of IELTS reading is to assess a student's ability to read texts on various topics in English. This part of the exam tests the ability to understand the meaning of a text, highlight its main idea, analyze the text and draw conclusions from what is read. The reading portion is scored solely on the correct answers to the 40 questions provided.

### **How difficult is IELTS Reading?**

Reading is not traditionally considered the most difficult part of IELTS. You are given ready-made texts and assignments; you just need to choose the correct answer. However, for many students, it is the reading part that causes



difficulty. The main difficulty for most students is their misunderstanding of the essence of IELTS Reading. When taking the exam, you need to remember that your main and only goal is to give the correct answers to the questions. Thus, you need to do everything to answer correctly. But many students, having seen the text, instead begin to reread it many times and guess at the meaning of each incomprehensible word. This only wastes the time allotted for the task, but does not help complete it successfully. In addition, IELTS texts are usually full of vocabulary that is incomprehensible to most students, because they relate to science, research, journalism, or are borrowed from the media. In other words, the main difficulty of the reading part lies in the incorrect understanding of the essence of the exam and in ignorance of this or that vocabulary and language expressions.

### **The process of IELTS Reading**

The IELTS Reading exam consists of 3 parts, each of which includes one or more texts:

- **IELTS Reading Part 1**

This part may include 1-3 texts on topics from everyday life. For example, this could be a hotel advertisement, a description of a sports center, an announcement or information about a language course. All texts in this part are quite short and based, first of all, on facts.

- **IELTS Reading Part 2**

The second part may also contain several texts. In this part there are texts related to the working and business sphere. This could be the text of the contract, instructions, legal documents of the company, etc.

- **IELTS Reading Part 3**



The last part usually consists of one text, but longer and more complex. Often these are academic texts that raise certain social problems or scientific issues.

- **Evaluation:**

The IELTS Reading task is to answer 40 questions based on the texts provided. For each correct answer, the student receives 1 point, then the received points are converted on a 9-point scale. That is, for 40 correct answers you will receive 9 points, and for 23-26 correct answers – 5 points.

### **14 types of IELTS Reading questions:**

There are 14 types of questions that can be found in IELTS Reading. Most often, questions of 3-4 types are presented for each of the three parts. In order to pass IELTS Reading with a score of 9, it is important to study all types of questions and be prepared for each of them.

#### **1) Matching headings:**

Task: select a heading from the list that corresponds to a section or paragraph in the text. What is important: understand the main essence of sections and paragraphs of the text, understand their content.

#### **Advice:**

- Read the headings before reading the text
- There are often more headings than necessary
- Analyze headings before trying to match them to sections or paragraphs
- Answers are often numbers (i, ii, iii, iv, etc.) – read instructions carefully to check



## 2) True/False, Yes/No, Not Given Questions

Task: to understand whether the text contains the information given in the question or the opinion of the author. What is important: identify specific information and quickly scan the text for its presence.

### Advice:

It is important to clearly understand the meaning of each answer option

- True/Yes – information is in the text
- False/No – the text contains information to the contrary
- Not Given – in principle, there is no such information in the text.

## 3) Matching Paragraph Information

Task: correlate the information given in the question with the information in one of the paragraphs of the text. What is important: identify specific information and quickly scan the text for its presence

### Advice:

- Rephrase the information in the question
- Find this information in paragraph
- Please note that not all paragraphs of the text may be used in the task.
- Read the instructions carefully, as the answers are usually indicated by letters (A, B, C, etc.)

## 4) Summary Completion Question

Task: fill in the gaps in the text of the assignment with words from paragraphs of the text or presented words. What is important: find specific information in the text, understand its meaning and choose the right words



**Advice:**

- Determine the part of speech that should fill the gap (noun, verb, adjective, etc.)
- Find the right word
- Use the grammatically correct form of the word when filling in the blank (this may vary!)

**5) Sentence Completion Questions**

Task: complete the sentences with words from the text. What is important: understand the general meaning of the text, scan it and find the necessary information and words

**Advice:**

- Determine the part of speech that should fill the gap in the sentence (noun, verb, adjective, etc.)
- Find the right word
- Use the grammatically correct form of the word when filling in the blank (this may vary!)

**6) Multiple Choice**

Task: choose the correct answer to the question or complete the sentence with one of 3-4 options. What is important: understand the general meaning of the text, scan it and find the necessary information

**Advice:**

- Rephrase the question and answer options
- Find the necessary information in the text



- 6) Read the instructions carefully, as the answers are usually indicated by letters (A, B, C, etc.)

### **7) List Selection**

Task: choose the correct answer to a question from a list of proposed options (including words, information and names); the task differs from multiple choice, since the questions are given a single long list of answer options. What is important: understand the general meaning of the text, scan it and find the necessary information.

#### **Advice:**

- Read all questions and answer options
- Rephrase them
- Identify keywords and ideas
- Find the necessary information in the text
- Read the instructions carefully, as the answers are usually indicated by letters (A, B, C, etc.).

### **8) Choosing a Title**

Task: select the most suitable text title from the list. What is important: understand the general meaning of the text, understand the difference between details and the main idea

#### **Advice:**

- Read the headings and identify the key differences between them
- Pay attention to the first and last paragraphs of the text (often they contain the main idea)



## 9) Classification

Task: choose which category from the list the information belongs to. What is important: understand the general meaning of the text and classify information

### Advice:

- Check out the categories presented
- Find information in the text
- Determine which category it belongs to

## 10) Matching Sentence Endings

Task: make a sentence by connecting the end and beginning of a sentence from the list provided. What is important: understand the general meaning and grammar of the sentence

### Advice:

- Read the full list of starting and ending parts of sentences
- Choose the possible endings of the sentences
- Choose the grammatically correct option from them
- Keep in mind that the number of final parts may exceed the number of initial parts
- Read the instructions carefully, as the answers are usually indicated by letters (A, B, C, etc.)

## 11) Table Completion

Task: fill out the table using the correct words from the text. What is important: find the necessary information in the text, understand the details and choose words

### Advice:



- Read the column names in the table
- Determine the word type for each part of the table
- Scan the text and find the information you need
- Before filling out the table, check how many words you can use in each case

## 12) Flow Chart Completion

Task: fill in the diagram using the correct words from the text. What is important: find the necessary information in the text, understand the details and order of the information presented, choose words

### Advice:

- Determine the type of words for each part of the diagram
- Scan the text and find the information you need
- Pay attention to the symbols in the diagram (arrows, etc.) to determine the order in which you fill it out
- Select the necessary words from the text
- Before filling out the diagram, check how many words you can use in each case

## 13) Diagram Completion

Task: complete the diagram. What is important: find information in the text, relate it to the diagram and choose the right words

### Advice:

- Determine the desired form of words (noun, verb, adjective, etc.)
- Find information in the text
- Select the necessary words from the text





- Before filling out the diagram, check how many words you can use in each case

#### **14) Short Answer**

Task: answer questions based on information in the text. What is important: find the necessary information in the text and understand the details.

#### **Advice:**

- Determine the desired form of words (noun, verb, adjective, etc.)
- Find information in the text
- Select the necessary words from the text
- Before filling out the diagram, check how many words you can use in each case

#### **How to prepare for IELTS Reading?**

There are several ways to effectively prepare for IELTS Reading:

- 1) As we noted above, in IELTS Reading you may encounter 14 different types of tasks. Become familiar with all question types and focus on developing the skills needed to pass these questions.
- 2) Practice the “skim and scan” technique, that is, viewing and “scanning” text to understand the general idea and quickly find the necessary information. Instead of thoughtfully reading the text and translating each word, learn to isolate from the text only the information and details you need.
- 3) Develop speed reading skills. The IELTS Reading exam has a time limit, so you must be able to read all the texts and answer the questions within the specified time frame.



- 4) Each task in the exam includes “key words” that help you find the necessary information for the answer in the text. It is important to learn to see keywords and use them correctly.
- 5) Increase your vocabulary and learn grammar. These are two factors that cause many students to score low in IELTS Reading. Don't just memorize words and their translations, but also learn the grammatical correct use of these words. Pay attention not only to individual words, but also to entire speech structures, this will allow you to get a clearer idea of how English sentences are constructed and will help you pass many test tasks.
- 6) Important preparation information is given in the relevant training manuals. Purchase several high-quality textbooks that will detail the specifics of IELTS testing and its pitfalls.
- 7) Read as many texts in English as possible. It is important that they be of different themes and styles. In the preparation process, you should abandon fiction and give preference to newspapers, magazines, scientific articles, websites and serious printed publications, such as The Economist, New Scientist, etc.
- 8) While reading texts, translate and memorize new words, increasing your vocabulary.
- 9) Find IELTS trial versions and their tasks in specialized manuals or on the Internet. Carefully study the topics of the texts in the Reading part, as well as the types of questions for the texts. This way, you will understand what kind of literature to read to prepare, and what tasks await you in the exam itself.
- 10) Pay attention to reviews from other students who have already taken IELTS. Personal experience is especially valuable when it comes to difficulties. On many forums, blogs, articles and videos, students share their



experiences and give recommendations on how to successfully pass IELTS Reading.

### **Practical advice**

In order to get a high enough score in IELTS Reading, follow a few simple tips:

- **Time management**

Carefully calculate the time you will spend on completing tasks. The IELTS Reading part lasts only 60 minutes. This means that you will have about 20 minutes for each of the 3 sections. Proper time management will help you stay within the given time and successfully complete tasks.

- **First – questions, and then – text**

In order to successfully pass the test, you need to work with each text and its tasks in the following sequence:

Read the title and understand what the text is about

Read all the questions to the texts and answer options in Multiple Choice

Scan the text twice: the first time – find out the general meaning of the text, the second time – try to find answers to these questions

- **Attention to questions**

Read the questions to the texts thoughtfully and carefully. Don't miss a single word. Often it is a misunderstanding of a question or inattention that leads to an incorrect answer.

- **If you can't find the answer to a question...**



You may not be able to find the answer to some of the questions in the text the first time. Do not panic! Just skip the question and answer the others. Most likely, when searching for answers to the remaining questions, you will find this missing answer.

**References:**

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