ROAD TO IELTS

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Reading

The basics

The test lasts 60 minutes, includes 40 questions and each correct answer is worth one mark, making a total of 40 marks.

The three sections

The Academic module comprises three texts from books, magazines or newspapers, written for non-specialist readers. The General Training module is in three sections, which progress from

- survival English such as public notices and advertisements, to
- workplace texts such as training materials, to
- a longer passage which may come from a book or magazine.

Task types

- Short answer questions
- Sentence completion
- Multiple choice
- Yes, No, Not given
- Matching headings to sections
- Classification

Preparation

To do well in IELTS Reading, you need to familiarise yourself with the types of texts you will see in the exam.

In the weeks leading up to your IELTS test, try to read as widely as possible. Don't limit yourself to one type of text and, if you are preparing for IELTS Academic, read articles with an academic style. On the right are four newspaper sites to try.

As you read, practise developing the skills you will need in IELTS, such as summarising the content, giving headings to paragraphs, deciding what is fact and what is opinion and thinking of synonyms for words you see in the text.

- **The Independent / Science**
- **The Age / Travel**
- **The New York Times / Health**
- **The Guardian / Women**

Three tips for your Reading test

- Make sure you are familiar with the question types. You can only do this by spending as much time as possible practising. Consider trying the British Council's **Road to IELTS**. Research on 130,000 candidates showed that they improved their ability to answer IELTS-type Reading questions by up to 64% — clear proof of the importance of practice.
- **Don't** start by reading the whole text and then the questions. You don't have time to do this. Start by skimming: look at the title, headings, the first paragraph, the first sentence of the other paragraphs and the final sentence of the text. This will give you a good overview.
- Now look at the questions and underline key words. As you do this, think of synonyms for these words because these are likely to occur in the text. For example, the word *game* might appear in the question, where the original word in the text is *match*.

In the test room

1. **Don't** panic if you don't know anything about the topic of the text. All the answers will be in the passage; you don't need any specialist knowledge.
2. **Leave** a question if you can't answer it. Come back to it later if you have time and if you really can't find the answer, guess. You don't lose marks for wrong answers.
3. **Remember** that unlike in the Listening test, you have no extra time to transfer your answers.
4. **Careless** mistakes cost marks. Make sure you copy the answer correctly if it is in the passage. And check your spelling!