

# IELTS Reading: Lesson 1



## ARTICLE: The Economy of Happiness

Instructions:

- 1) Read the article below as fast as you can. Try to remember as much detail as possible without slowing down.  
\*\*If it is too difficult remember this: "Don't worry, that is why you are taking this class. No one is an expert the first try."\*\*
- 2) Read the article again slowly. Compare how much you understand this time.
- 3) Read the article a third time, translate words you don't know and write them down. How is your understanding different?

**A)**What if there was an equation of happiness? Some countries stand out for their high level of well-being. To be happy, you don't have to be rich. This maxim can be verified through the examples of Costa Rica, the Kingdom of Bhutan, New Zealand, and Amsterdam! The governments of these four territories promote the prosperity of their inhabitants, not that of their economy. This way of rethinking public policies could thus inspire Western countries amid a pandemic health crisis.

**B)**Each administration has its method. Bhutan is a pioneer in this respect. Through the "Gross National Happiness" developed in the 1970s, it tends to lead an economy that improves the lives of its people. Through this measure, Bhutan, therefore, focuses on education, living standards, health, governance, and the environment; but also on mental well-being, work-life balance, cultural diversity, and cultural life. Costa Rica is emulating this example by investing primarily in health, affordable housing, and especially education. Citizens pollute little with an ecological footprint that is one-third that of Americans. Then, instead of competing with each other, they have been able to maintain community social ties.

**C)**These methods are not limited to isolated countries, the rich follow suit. With its "welfare budget," New Zealand is fighting violence, poverty, and climate change. In Europe, Amsterdam is setting an example. Since April 2020, the municipality has been working with economist Kate Raworth to maximize development without damaging the Earth.

**D)**Fostering an economy of happiness rather than GDP has incredible benefits! Bhutan, the only country to remain carbon neutral, has managed to double the life expectancy of its population, from 32.4 years in 1960 to 70.2 in 2017. But it is in Costa Rica that men live the longest, up to about 84 years! The state also ranks 15th in the United Nations World Happiness Report 2020. In New Zealand and Amsterdam, measures are preparing more resilient societies for future threats. There, economic success depends on subsistence and quality of life, without increasing GDP.

**E)**GDP is the reference tool for calculating a state's success, yet it has some problematic shortcomings. It evaluates the wealth produced within a country without taking into account its distribution, nor the distribution of unpaid work, natural resources, education, let alone welfare. This measure, therefore, values a consumerist economic model, obsessed with growth, whose flaws have been revealed by Covid-19.

\*\*Source<<https://globalgoodness.ca/en/the-economy-of-happiness/>>

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### VOCABULARY & PHRASES

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well-being

GDP

work-life balance

isolated

resilient

health-crisis

pandemic

life-expectancy

shortcomings

welfare

consumerist

cultural diversity

ecological footprint

social ties

public policies

# IELTS Speaking: Lesson 2



## QUESTIONS: The Economy of Happiness

### Questions 1-6

The Reading Passage has six paragraphs A–F. Choose the correct heading for each paragraph from the list of headings below.

- I. Inspiration from other countries
  - II. Development in Isolated Countries
  - III. GDP over Happiness
  - IV. How to build a welfare society
  - V. Drawbacks of GDP
  - VI. Happiness before growth
1. Section A
  2. Section B
  3. Section C
  4. Section D
  5. Section E

### Questions 6-10

Fill in the blanks below with words taken from the Reading Passage.

Use NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS for each answer.

6. Through this measure, Bhutan, therefore, focuses on education, living standards, health, governance, and the environment; but also on mental well-being, \_\_\_\_\_, cultural diversity, and cultural life.
7. This way of rethinking public policies could thus inspire Western countries amid a \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Since April 2020, the municipality has been working with \_\_\_\_\_ to maximize development without damaging the Earth.
9. In New Zealand and Amsterdam, measures are preparing more \_\_\_\_\_ for future threats.
10. This measure, therefore, values a consumerist economic model, \_\_\_\_\_, whose flaws have been revealed by Covid-19.

### Questions 11-16

Classify the following descriptions as referring to

- CR(Costa Rica)
- KB(Kingdom of Bhutan)
- NZ(New Zealand)
- A(Amsterdam)
- WC(Western countries)

You may use any answer more than once.

11. is a pioneer in happiness.
12. need to rethink public policies.
13. working to maximize development without damaging the Earth.
14. has managed to double the life expectancy of its population.
15. has men that live the longest.
16. is fighting violence, poverty, and climate change.

**\*\*Answers will be provided after class\*\***