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BSc Degree

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English - 1 (Basic English)
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How to Prepare for Reading Test

Hi, welcome all. In today session, let us discuss the question how do we prepare for a reading test?

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EXAM FORMAT

- 60 minutes and 40 questions
- Academic and general exams
- For academic test, there will be three sections with one long passage per section.
- For general training, usually two passages in the first two sections and one passage in the third section.
- Overall, questions for general training exam is easier compared to academic exam.



So, in this particular section, I am going to discuss about the IELTS exam, but, the strategies that I give you to prepare for a reading test is applicable to all kinds of reading test, be it GRE, or TOEFL or, the reading test that is expected out of you in any other test, where they give you passages and ask you to find answers to those questions following the passage. So, well, let me start by discussing the exam format of IELTS exam.

In IELTS exam you have 40 questions in the reading session, and you have 60 minutes to find answers to those 40 questions. There are two types of IELTS exam I have already discussed that one is the academic IELTS, and the other is a general exam. Well, for academic IELTS test, there will be three sections, with one long passage per section in the reading part of it.

And for the general training, usually two passages in the first two sections, and one passage in the third section. Again, this is for the reading part. Overall questions for the general training exam is easier compared to the academic exam.

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IELTS Academic Correct Answers	IELTS Score*
39 - 40	9
37 - 38	8.5
35 - 36	8
33 - 34	7.5
30 - 32	7
27 - 29	6.5
23 - 26	6
19 - 22	5.5
15 - 18	5
13 - 14	4.5
10 - 12	4
8 - 9	3.5
6 - 7	3
4 - 5	2.5

IELTS General Correct Answers	IELTS Score*
40	9
39	8.5
37 - 38	8
36	7.5
34 - 35	7
32 - 33	6.5
30 - 31	6
27 - 29	5.5
23 - 26	5
19 - 22	4.5
15 - 18	4
12 - 14	3.5
9 - 11	3
6 - 8	2.5

BAND SCORE AND THE NUMBER OF CORRECT ANSWERS



Now, this particular slide will show you the number of correct answers that you are expected to meet in order to fetch the band score that is given here in the column. For example, in IELTS academic test, you need to get 39 to 40 answers correct in order to score 9. Whereas, in general, in the IELTS general exam you need to score all 40 questions right. You need to get all 40 questions right to get a band score of 9.

Again, if you see 37 to 38 questions should be right for you to score a band score of 8.5 in the IELTS academic test, whereas 39 questions need to be correct in the IELTS general exam to fetch you 8.5 band score. 35 to 36 in academia's IELTS exam to fetch your band score of 8, and 37 to 38 in IELTS general exam test to fetch your band score of 8.

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STRATEGIES

- Reading section progresses from simple questions to difficult questions. The further you go, the more difficult the questions become. Go through the easy questions quite quickly to save more time to find answers to the more difficult ones.
- 15 minutes on Section 1 (easy), 20 minutes on section 2 and 25 minutes on section 3 (tough).
- Don't spend too much time on any single question. Mark them to review and come back to them if you have extra time.
- Never read the whole passage in one go. Many questions come in order. Read the first question, then quickly scan and read the passage until you find where the answer is. Then you must slow down, re-read the question/sentence and you find the answer. Then read the second question and repeat the process. This method saves a lot of time.



Now, let us quickly discuss a strategies, or the let me give you some tips as to how you need to prepare for a reading test. Well, reading section progresses from simple questions to difficult questions. So, the further you go, the more difficult the questions are going to be. So go through the easy questions quite quickly. To save more time and find answers to the more difficult questions.

This is tip number 1. Now, having said that, I must tell you, you should not take more than 15 minutes on section 1, which is the easy section, and 20 minutes on section 2, which is somewhere between easy and intermediate, or medium difficulty, and 25 minutes on section 3, which is considered to be the toughest session. Now, do not spend too much time on a single question.

Now, it is quite common for all of us to get stuck in, get stuck to a particular question because you are not able to find the answer to that. And I have seen lot of learners, and candidates appearing for the exam do this mistake, they end up spending a lot of time to find answer to a particular question because they stuck with it. Now, that will actually take a lot of your time that you are supposed to be spending on other questions.

And if you end up spending the time, the kind of time that is meant for 4 to 5 questions on a single question, then you are going to lose marks for 4 to 5 questions. Now, even if you get that 1 answer right. Therefore, a simple technique to help you with that situation is to I would

suggest is to mark the particular question that you are stuck with, and review them later, once you come back to them when you have extra time.

Now, next is an important tip. It is very important. Keep in mind, never read the whole passage in one go. Many questions come in order. Read the first question, then quickly scan. Read the passage until you find where the answer is. And then you must slow down reread the question or the sentence and you find the answer. And you need to repeat the same process for the second question. So, this method will actually help you save a lot of time.

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STRATEGIES



- There are two types of questions : the ones that come in order and the ones that don't come in order.
 - a) Missing words (ordered)
 - b) True/False & Yes/No/Not given type of questions (ordered)
 - c) Yes/No/Not given type of questions in section 3 (not ordered)
 - d) Multiple choice questions (not ordered)
 - e) Match the following (para number will be given)
 - f) Matching paragraphs – which para contains the following information (not in order)
 - g) Sentence completion (not ordered)
 - h) Questions in section 3 (not ordered) – Most difficult ones



Now, there are two types of questions, the ones that come in order, and the ones that do not come in order. For example, what do I mean by the questions that come in order? Meaning the first question could have answer in paragraph 1. And the last question could have the answer in the last paragraph.

It will never happen, that if a question is in order, the last question will have its answer in first paragraph, and the first question will have its answer in the last paragraph. So, this is what I mean by the ordered and non-ordered questions. Well, missing words, type of questions are always ordered.

So, if you ever find the answer to the first question in the second paragraph, then your answer to the second question is never going to be in the first paragraph. It's either going to be in the second paragraph, or the subsequent paragraphs. So, this is what I mean by ordered and non-ordered questions. So, missing words are always going to be asked in an ordered fashion.

True, or false, and yes, no, not given type of questions again in an ordered fashion. Yes, no, not given type of questions in section 3 will not be ordered. Therefore, you will have to read the entire passage to situate the answer. Now, multiple choice questions are always not ordered. Again, you will have to read or scan the whole passage and not just one paragraph in the beginning or the end to find the answer. Match the following type of questions will always have the para number given.

So, you need to scan just that paragraph. Then there is something known as a matching paragraph type of questions, where para contains certain information and those informations will be given in an non ordered fashion. Therefore, you will have to go through the entire passage. The next type of question that you get in reading is sentence completion, again, not ordered. And all the questions that you get in section 3 will not be ordered. And therefore, section 3 is considered a little tough when compared to the other two sections.

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STRATEGIES



- Take a lot of practise tests before taking the exam. Accustom yourself with the exam format and question types.
- Identify keywords: While reading a question, identify the keywords. That will help you keep concentrated on what you are looking for. Highlight those keywords. You may also highlight key information like dates and names. Answers to most questions lie in several words. You don't need to understand everything. You just need to find those words.
- The correct answers and the words in the key phrase will be paraphrased. They will not be repeated. But the meaning will be the same. Sometimes you may find words in the text and the same words in one of the options. Most likely that is a trap and is not the correct option. So, check the meaning.



Now, how do you prepare for reading exam? Well, I would say the first thing that you need to do is take a lot of practice tests before taking the exam. Accustom yourself with the exam format and the type of questions that they generally ask you in that particular section. The next important point is to identify keywords.

For example, while reading a question, you definitely have to identify the keyword. This will help you keep concentrated on what you are looking for. And highlight those keywords and you may also highlight key information like dates, and names, and answers to most questions lie in several words and never in one word.

What I would suggest you is you do not need to understand everything, but you just need to find those words or keywords, rarely in one word, and most often in several words. The final important point is the correct answers, and the words in the key phrase will always be paraphrased, keep that in mind. They will not be repeated, but the meaning will be the same. Sometimes you may find words in the text and the same words in one of the options.

Most likely that is a trap, and it is not the correct answer. So, check for the meaning and do not be fixated entirely on the keyword. So, these are all my tips and the strategies that I would like you to be prepared with before appearing for reading test. With that we are coming to the end of the session. I will meet you with a different topic on a different day. Until then stay safe. Stay cool bye.

