# IELTS Academic Practice Test

## Online Dating

**Test Number:** 002 **Target Level:** B1-B2 Intensive **Total Time:** Approximately 2 hours 45 minutes

# Section 1: Reading

**Time: 60 minutes**

## Reading Passage 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on **Questions 1–10**, which are based on Reading Passage 1 below.

### The Algorithm of Attraction

In the past, finding a romantic partner often depended on social circles, chance encounters, or introductions from friends and family. Today, the landscape of love has been dramatically reshaped by technology. Online dating, once a niche activity surrounded by stigma, has become a mainstream and socially accepted way to meet potential partners. At the heart of this revolution are the complex algorithms that power dating apps and websites, silently working behind the scenes to suggest who we might find attractive.

These algorithms function as digital matchmakers. When a user creates a profile, they provide a wealth of data, from basic demographics like age and location to more personal details about their hobbies, education, political views, and what they are

looking for in a relationship. This information forms the initial dataset. The algorithm then uses this data to identify and suggest other users who have compatible profiles. For example, if a user expresses an interest in hiking and classical music, the system will prioritise showing them other users who share these passions.

However, the matching process goes far beyond simple keyword filtering. Modern dating platforms employ sophisticated machine learning models that learn from user behaviour. Every swipe, message, and interaction is a new data point that feeds back into the system. If a user consistently shows interest in profiles of a certain type—for instance, people who have travelled extensively—the algorithm will learn this preference and adjust future recommendations accordingly. This is known as collaborative filtering, where the system makes predictions about a user's interests by collecting preferences from many other users. It assumes that if person A has the same opinion as person B on one issue, they are more likely to have the same opinion on another.

Furthermore, some platforms use even more advanced techniques, such as analysing language patterns in user bios and messages to gauge personality traits. For example, the use of positive, optimistic language might be identified as a desirable trait and used to match individuals with similar communication styles. Some apps have even experimented with facial recognition technology to analyse the physical features of people a user finds attractive, although this practice has raised significant privacy concerns.

Despite the technological sophistication, the effectiveness of these algorithms is a subject of ongoing debate. Critics argue that human attraction is far too complex and nuanced to be predicted by a computer. They suggest that the chemistry and spark that ignite a real-world connection cannot be quantified in a dataset. Moreover, there is a risk that these algorithms may create "echo chambers," where users are only shown profiles of people who are very similar to them, potentially limiting their exposure to a diverse range of partners. While technology has undoubtedly made it easier to meet more people, the magic of finding a true connection may still lie beyond the reach of any algorithm.

## Questions 1–5

Do the following statements agree with the information given in Reading Passage 1?

In boxes 1–5 on your answer sheet, write

| | |
|---|---|
| **TRUE** | if the statement agrees with the information |
| **FALSE** | if the statement contradicts the information |
| **NOT GIVEN** | if there is no information on this |

1. Online dating has always been a popular way to meet people.

2. Algorithms primarily use a user's age to suggest matches.

3. Collaborative filtering works by analysing a user's behaviour and comparing it to the behaviour of others.

4. All dating apps have stopped using facial recognition due to privacy issues.

5. The passage concludes that algorithms are definitively the best way to find a partner.

## Questions 6–10

Complete the sentences below.

Choose **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** from the passage for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes 6–10 on your answer sheet.

1. The complex systems that suggest potential partners on dating apps are known as _____.

2. The information a user provides when creating a profile is the _____ for the algorithm.

3. The algorithm can adjust its recommendations based on a user's _____, such as their swipes and messages.

4. Some experts believe that the spark of a real-world connection cannot be _____ in a dataset.

5. A potential downside of algorithms is that they might create _____, limiting the variety of profiles a user sees.

# Reading Passage 2

## Crafting the Perfect Profile: The New First Impression

In the world of online dating, your profile is your digital handshake, your opening line, and your first impression all rolled into one. It is the single most important tool you have to attract a potential partner. While it may seem like a simple task, crafting a profile that is both authentic and appealing is an art form. It requires a careful balance of showcasing your best qualities without appearing arrogant, and being honest without oversharing. Experts in digital communication and relationship psychology have identified several key elements that contribute to a successful online dating profile.

### A. The Primacy of the Photograph

Before a single word of your bio is read, a potential match will see your photos. Research consistently shows that profiles with high-quality, clear photographs receive significantly more attention. The ideal photo selection should include a variety of shots. A clear, smiling headshot should be your primary picture. This should be supplemented with photos that reveal more about your personality and lifestyle—a picture of you hiking, a shot of you with friends (but not as the main profile picture), or one with a beloved pet. The goal is to paint a picture of a well-rounded, approachable individual. Avoid using old or heavily edited photos, as this can create a sense of mistrust when you eventually meet in person.

### B. The Bio: More Than Just Words

While photos provide the initial attraction, the biography (or 'bio') is where a deeper connection begins. A common mistake is to simply list adjectives like "fun, kind, and adventurous." A more effective approach is to 'show, don't tell'. Instead of saying you are adventurous, describe a recent adventure: "I recently went kayaking for the first time and loved it, even though I fell in twice!" This creates a more engaging and memorable narrative. The bio should be positive and concise. A long, rambling essay can be off-putting. Aim for a tone that is light-hearted and open, and end with a question or a 'call to action' to make it easier for someone to start a conversation, such as, "What's the best concert you've ever been to?"

## C. The Pitfall of Clichés

Many dating profiles are filled with the same tired clichés: "I'm looking for my partner in crime," "I love to laugh," or "I enjoy long walks on the beach." While these sentiments may be true, they are so overused that they become meaningless and make a profile blend in with the crowd. To stand out, be specific. Instead of saying you love to travel, mention a specific place you loved and why. Instead of saying you have a "good sense of humour," tell a short, appropriate joke or a funny one-liner. Originality is key to capturing someone's attention.

## D. Honesty as a Strategy

It can be tempting to exaggerate or omit certain details to make a profile seem more perfect. However, experts agree that honesty is the best policy in the long run. Misrepresenting your height, age, or interests will only lead to an awkward and disappointing first date. Being upfront about what you are looking for—whether it's a serious relationship or something more casual—is also crucial. This transparency helps to filter out incompatible matches from the beginning, saving both time and emotional energy. An authentic profile will attract people who are genuinely interested in the real you, which is the foundation of any successful relationship.

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## Questions 11–14

Reading Passage 2 has four sections, **A–D**.

Choose the correct heading for each section from the list of headings below.

Write the correct number, **i–vi**, in boxes 11–14 on your answer sheet.

**List of Headings**

| | |
|---|---|
| i. | The danger of using common phrases |
| ii. | The importance of being truthful |
| iii. | The most popular types of photos |
| iv. | Writing an engaging personal description |
| v. | How to choose the right dating app |
| vi. | The visual element of a profile |

1. Section **A** ___
2. Section **B** ___
3. Section **C** ___
4. Section **D** ___

## Questions 15–20

Complete the summary below.

Choose **ONE WORD ONLY** from the passage for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes 15–20 on your answer sheet.

**Creating a Successful Dating Profile**

Crafting an effective online dating profile is essential for attracting a partner. The first thing people notice is your photos, so it is important to use high-quality images. Using old or heavily **15** _____ photos should be avoided as it can lead to a feeling of mistrust.

The profile's bio is where a more profound **16** _____ can be formed. Instead of just listing adjectives, it is better to 'show, don't tell' by describing a personal **17** _____. It is also a good idea to end the bio with a question to encourage conversation.

To make a profile stand out, it is important to avoid using overused **18** _____. *Being specific and original is a better strategy. Finally, experts agree*

*that* **19** _____ is the best approach in the long term. Being transparent about your intentions can help to filter out people who are not a good **20** _____ from the start.

# Reading Passage 3

You should spend about 20 minutes on **Questions 21–30**, which are based on Reading Passage 3 below.

## The Social Impact of a Swipe-Right World

The rise of online dating has been one of the most significant social transformations of the 21st century. In less than two decades, it has evolved from a fringe activity to a dominant force in how people form relationships. This shift has had profound effects, not only on individuals looking for love but also on society as a whole, altering social norms, relationship dynamics, and even the concept of commitment itself.

One of the most widely discussed impacts is the perception of a "paradox of choice." Dating apps provide users with a seemingly endless stream of potential partners, far more than one could ever meet through traditional means. While this abundance of options might seem like an advantage, studies in behavioural psychology suggest it can have a negative effect. When faced with too many choices, people can experience decision paralysis, making it difficult to choose any single option. Furthermore, the constant awareness that a potentially "better" match might be just a swipe away can lead to a lack of satisfaction with current choices and a reluctance to commit to a relationship. This can foster a culture of "disposable dating," where connections are easily made and just as easily discarded.

Another significant social change is the way online dating has affected social circles and community integration. Historically, people were most likely to partner with someone from their immediate social environment—their neighbourhood, workplace, or circle of friends. Online dating has broken down these geographical and social barriers. A 2019 study from Stanford University found that meeting online has become the most popular way for couples in the United States to connect, surpassing introductions through friends. This has led to a notable increase in couples from different social backgrounds and levels of education, suggesting that online dating may be contributing to a more integrated and diverse society.

However, the widespread use of dating apps has also raised concerns about their impact on mental health. The process of being constantly evaluated based on a few photos and a short bio can be stressful and damaging to one's self-esteem. Users may experience feelings of rejection or anxiety if they do not receive as many matches or messages as they expect. The phenomenon of "ghosting"—where a person abruptly cuts off all communication without explanation—has become commonplace and can be a particularly painful form of social rejection. The pressure to present a perfect, highly curated version of oneself can also lead to feelings of inauthenticity and burnout.

Ultimately, the social legacy of the swipe-right world is complex and multifaceted. While online dating has created unprecedented opportunities for connection and has potentially contributed to a more diverse society, it has also introduced new challenges. It has altered our perception of choice, reshaped our social networks, and created new pressures on our mental well-being. As this technology continues to evolve, its long-term impact on the fabric of our social lives remains a critical area of observation and study.

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## Questions 21–25

Choose the correct letter, **A, B, C,** or **D**.

Write the correct letter in boxes 21–25 on your answer sheet.

1. What is the "paradox of choice" in the context of online dating? A. Having too many options makes it harder to make a decision. B. People have very few choices on dating apps. C. The best partners are always difficult to find. D. People are more likely to commit when they have many options.

2. According to the Stanford University study, what has been the most popular way for couples to meet in the US? A. Through family introductions. B. At the workplace. C. Through mutual friends. D. Through online platforms.

3. What is one positive social impact of online dating mentioned in the passage? A. It encourages people to stay within their own social circles. B. It has led to an increase in couples from different backgrounds. C. It has made it easier to find partners in the same neighbourhood. D. It has reduced the number of people getting married.

4. What is a common mental health concern associated with online dating? A. The feeling of having too much privacy. B. The stress of being constantly judged and the possibility of rejection. C. The difficulty of using the technology. D. The lack of people to talk to.

5. What is the author's overall conclusion about the social impact of online dating? A. It is entirely negative and should be avoided. B. It is a complex issue with both positive and negative effects. C. It has had no significant impact on society. D. It is a temporary trend that will soon disappear.

## Questions 26–30

Complete the notes below.

Choose **ONE WORD ONLY** from the passage for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes 26–30 on your answer sheet.

**The Social Effects of Online Dating**

- **The Paradox of Choice:**
  - Having too many options can lead to decision **26** _____.
  - It can also create a reluctance to **27** _____ to a single partner.

- **Social Integration:**
  - Online dating has broken down geographical and social **28** _____.
  - This may be helping to create a more **29** _____ society.

- **Mental Health Concerns:**
  - The process of being evaluated can be damaging to a person's **30** _____.
  - The phenomenon of "ghosting" is a common form of rejection.

# Section 2: Listening

**Time: Approximately 30 minutes (plus 10 minutes transfer time)**

## Listening Task 1

**You will hear a man, David, giving a short presentation on how to stay safe when dating online. Listen and answer questions 1–6.**

### Questions 1–6

Complete the notes below.

Write **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** for each answer.

**Tips for Safe Online Dating**

- **Protecting Your Details:**
    - Avoid sharing **1** _____ like your home address too early.
    - Use the app's own messaging system initially.

- **Checking Profile Pictures:**
    - You can use a search engine to do a **2** _____ on photos.
    - This helps you check if the photos are **3** _____.

- **Meeting in Person:**
    - For a first date, always choose a **4** _____.
    - Tell a friend or family member about your **5** _____ as a safety measure.

- **General Advice:**
    - Always trust your **6** _____ if a situation feels wrong.

# Listening Task 2

**You will hear two colleagues, Fiona and Ben, talking about their different experiences with work-life balance. Listen and answer questions 7–12.**

## Questions 7–9

Choose the correct letter, **A, B,** or **C**.

1. What is the main problem Fiona is experiencing? A. She does not enjoy the work she is doing. B. She feels overwhelmed and that work is taking over her life. C. She is having disagreements with her colleagues.

2. What was the main cause of Ben's burnout a year ago? A. He was working long hours and not disconnecting. B. He did not have a comfortable place to work. C. He was travelling too much for his job.

3. What is Ben's main strategy for disconnecting in the evenings? A. He turns off all his electronic devices. B. He leaves his work computer and phone in a specific place. C. He works from home to save time.

## Questions 10–12

Do the following statements agree with the information given in the conversation?

Write

|  |  |
|---|---|
| **TRUE** | if the statement agrees with the information |
| **FALSE** | if the statement contradicts the information |
| **NOT GIVEN** | if there is no information on this |

1. Ben believes that most work-related issues are not urgent and can be dealt with the next day.

2. Ben thinks that having a good work-life balance has made him less effective at his job.

3. Fiona has already tried joining a gym to improve her work-life balance.

# Section 3: Writing

**Time: 60 minutes**

## Writing Task 1 (General Training)

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

> *You recently used a dating app and had a very positive experience meeting someone. Write an email to a friend who is single and thinking about trying online dating.*
>
> *In your email, you should:*
>
> - *explain why you decided to try the dating app*
> - *describe the person you met*
> - *encourage your friend to try it and offer some advice*

Write at least 150 words.

You do **NOT** need to write any addresses.

Begin your email as follows:

**Hi [Friend's Name],**

## Writing Task 2

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

Write about the following topic:

> *In today's world, many people use dating apps to find a partner. Some people think this is a positive development, while others believe it has negative effects on relationships and society.*
>
> *Discuss both these views and give your own opinion.*

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.

Write at least 250 words.

# Section 4: Speaking

**Time: 11–14 minutes**

## Part 1: Introduction and Interview (4–5 minutes)

**Let's talk about friendship.**

- How important are friends to you?

- How often do you see your friends?

- What do you and your friends usually do together?

- Is it easy to make new friends where you live?

**Now, let's talk about using technology to communicate.**

- How often do you use social media to keep in touch with people?

- Do you prefer talking to people on the phone or through text messages? Why?

- What are the advantages of using video calls to talk to people?

- Do you think technology has made it easier or harder to form close relationships?

## Part 2: Individual Long Turn (3–4 minutes)

You have one minute to prepare. You may make notes if you wish.

**Describe a time you met someone for the first time.**

You should say:

- who the person was

- where you met them
- what you talked about and explain what your first impression of this person was.

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## Part 3: Two-Way Discussion (4–5 minutes)

**Let's consider the topic of making friends.**

- What are the most important qualities you look for in a friend?
- Why do you think some friendships last a lifetime while others do not?
- Is it more difficult to make friends as you get older? Why/Why not?

**Now, let's talk about the influence of the internet on relationships.**

- What are the advantages and disadvantages of using apps to meet new people?
- Some people say that online relationships are not as genuine as relationships formed in person. What is your opinion?
- How has social media changed the way people interact with each other in their romantic relationships?

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# Section 5: Grammar

**Time: 25 minutes**

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## Part 1: Sentence Transformation

**Instructions:** For questions 1-5, complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence, using the word given. **Do not change the word given.** You must use between two and five words, including the word given.

1. I regret not being more careful with my profile. **WISH** I _____ more careful with my profile.

2. "You should update your photos," my friend told me. **ADVISED** My friend _____ my photos.

3. It was a mistake to send that message. **SHOULD** I _____ that message.

4. She was so popular that she received hundreds of messages. **SUCH** She was _____ person that she received hundreds of messages.

5. He decided to delete the app after one bad date. **UP** He decided to give _____ the app after one bad date.

## Part 2: Error Correction

**Instructions:** For questions 6-10, read the text below. Some lines are correct, and some have a word which should not be there. If a line is correct, put a tick (✓). If a line has a word which should not be there, write the word.

**My First Online Date**

| Line | Text | Answer |
|------|------|--------|
| 6. | I was very nervous before to my first date from a dating app. | ___ |
| 7. | We had been talking for a few weeks, so I felt like I knew him. | ___ |
| 8. | He suggested to meeting at a coffee shop in the city centre. | ___ |
| 9. | Despite of my nerves, we had a wonderful conversation. | ___ |
| 10. | I am seeing him again next week, which I am looking forward to it. | ___ |

## Part 3: Multiple Choice

**Instructions:** For questions 11-20, choose the correct word or phrase to complete the sentence.

1. If I _____ you, I would choose a more recent photo for your profile. A. was B. am C. were

2. He admitted _____ his age on his profile to seem younger. A. to change B. changing C. change

3. She has been using the app _____ last January. A. for B. since C. by

4. This is the _____ profile I have ever seen. A. most bad B. worst C. baddest

5. You _____ give out your address to someone you've just met online. A. don't have to B. must C. shouldn't

6. I'm not used to _____ so many messages from strangers. A. receiving B. receive C. have received

7. The man _____ profile I was looking at had a very interesting job. A. who B. which C. whose

8. By the time she replied, I _____ about the message. A. have forgotten B. had forgotten C. forgot

9. He is interested _____ someone who shares his love of animals. A. to find B. in finding C. for finding

10. It's important to be honest, _____ you might cause disappointment later. A. otherwise B. despite C. however

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**END OF TEST**