

Collins | English for Exams

READING FOR IELTS

Els Van Geyte &
Rhona Snelling



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Collins Reading for IELTS

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Introduction

Who is this book for?

Reading for IELTS will prepare you for the IELTS Reading test whether you are taking the test for the first time or re-sitting the test. It has been written for learners with band score 5–5.5 who are trying to achieve band score 6.5 or higher.

The structured approach and comprehensive answer key have been designed so that you can use the materials to study on your own. However, the book can also be used as a supplementary reading skills course for IELTS preparation classes. The book provides enough material for approximately 50 hours of classroom time.

Content

Reading for IELTS is divided into 12 units. Each unit focuses on a topic area that you are likely to encounter in the IELTS Reading test. This helps you to build up a bank of vocabulary and ideas related to a variety of the topics. As in the IELTS test, the texts are taken from authentic sources. These may contain narratives, logical arguments, descriptions or discussions. Some of the texts contain visuals.

Units 1–11 cover the task types that you will see in the IELTS Reading test. Every exercise is relevant to the exam. The aims listed at the start of each unit specify the key skills, techniques and language covered in the unit. You work towards Unit 12, which provides a final practice IELTS Reading test.

Additionally, the book provides examination strategies telling you what to expect and how best to succeed in the test. *Exam information* is presented in clear, easy-to-read boxes. *Exam tips* in each unit highlight essential exam techniques and can be rapidly reviewed at a glance.

There are also *Watch out* boxes that will help you avoid common errors made in the exam. Finally, the *Exam tutor* at the end of each unit gives you the opportunity to revise and consolidate the exam skills you have studied.

Unit structure

Each of the first 11 units is divided into three parts.

Part 1 Language development introduces vocabulary related to the topic, often in the context of short reading texts. A range of exercises gives you the opportunity to learn and use the vocabulary in a variety of contexts. The focus is on strategies and activities that will help improve your reading skills, for example, working out the meaning of unknown words through word components, or by examining word forms. The vocabulary is presented using Collins COBUILD dictionary definitions.

Part 2 Exam skills provides step-by-step exercises and guidance on specific task types that appear in the exam. Each unit covers typical text types found in the the exam and focuses on different task types and skills. *Exam information* and *Exam tips* show you how to approach each task type and will help you develop successful test-taking strategies.

Part 3 Exam practice provides exam practice for the same tasks that you did in Part 2, using the same question and text types. The format follows the actual exam. Each unit also includes an *Exam tutor* checklist after the exam practice that will help you assess your readiness for the actual exam.

Answer key

A comprehensive answer key is provided for all sections of the book, including notes on why certain answers are correct or incorrect.

Using the book for self-study

If you are new to IELTS, we recommend that you work systematically through the 12 units in order to benefit from its progressive structure. If you are a more experienced learner, you can use the aims listed at the start of each unit to select the most useful exercises.

Each unit contains between three to four hours of self-study material. Having access to someone who can provide informed feedback on the reading practice exercises is an advantage. However, you can still learn a lot working alone or with a study partner willing to give and receive peer feedback.

Part 1: Language development

Ideally, you should begin each unit by working through the *Part 1: Language development* exercises. Try to answer the questions without looking at a dictionary in order to develop the skill of inferring the meaning of unfamiliar words from context. This is important because dictionaries cannot be used in the actual exam.

Part 2: Exam skills

Work through the *Part 2: Exam skills* from beginning to end. It is important to study the *Exam information* and *Exam tips* about each of the Reading task types, so that you become familiar with how to approach the different tasks in the test. Doing this will also help you develop more general skills for reading.

The strategies covered should be thoroughly mastered so that during the actual exam you are fully prepared for each section and can focus on reading and answering the questions. In the IELTS test itself, there is a time limit and you usually have to work fast, but while studying Part 2 of each unit in this book, take your time and learn as much as you can about the different task types.

Part 3: Exam practice

This section contains Exam practice questions and the *Exam tutor*. After you have done the practice questions, it is a good idea to spend some time reviewing why certain answers are the correct ones and then work through the *Exam tutor*. For this reason, we suggest you approach this part in the following way:

First do the exam. Here, you should focus on answering the questions correctly. You should try and complete the Exam practice questions within the time limit set, as this gives you the opportunity to practise under exam conditions. After you have finished the Exam practice questions, make sure the format and spelling of your answers are correct. Then, check your answers using the answer key at the back of the book.

Unit 12 Practice exam

This is a complete Reading practice test. This unit should be done under exam conditions. Remember that the total allocated time is 60 minutes; there is no extra time to transfer answers. Please keep this in mind when doing Unit 12.

Using the book in the classroom

If you are a teacher, you can use *Reading for IELTS* either as your main IELTS coursebook or as a supplementary course. Detailed teacher's notes for each unit are available at: www.nhantriviet.com/collinsielts.

The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) test

IELTS is jointly managed by the British Council, Cambridge ESOL Examinations and IDP Education, Australia. There are two versions of the test:

- Academic
- General Training

Academic is for students wishing to study at undergraduate or postgraduate levels in an English-medium environment.

General Training is for people who wish to migrate to an English-speaking country. This book is primarily for students taking the Academic version.

The test

There are four modules:

Listening	30 minutes, plus 10 minutes for transferring answers to the answer sheet. NB: the audio is heard only once. Approx. 10 questions per section Section 1: two speakers discuss a social situation Section 2: one speaker talks about a non-academic topic Section 3: up to four speakers discuss an educational project Section 4: one speaker gives a talk of general academic interest
Reading	60 minutes 3 texts, taken from authentic sources, on general, academic topics. They may contain diagrams, charts, etc. 40 questions: may include multiple choice, sentence completion, completing a diagram, graph or chart, choosing headings, yes/no/not given, true/false/not given, classification and matching.
Writing	Task 1: 20 minutes: description of a table, chart, graph or diagram (150 words minimum) Task 2: 40 minutes: an essay in response to an argument or problem (250 words minimum)
Speaking	11–14 minutes A three-part face-to-face oral interview with an examiner. The interview is recorded. Part 1: introductions and general questions (4–5 mins) Part 2: individual long turn (3–4 mins) – the candidate is given a task, has one minute to prepare, then talks for 1–2 minutes, with some questions from the examiner. Part 3: two-way discussion (4–5 mins): the examiner asks further questions on the topic from Part 2, and gives the candidate the opportunity to discuss more abstract issues or ideas.
Timetabling	Listening, Reading and Writing must be taken on the same day, and in the order listed above. Speaking can be taken up to 7 days before or after the other modules.
Scoring	Each section is given a band score. The average of the four scores produces the Overall Band Score. You do not pass or fail IELTS; you receive a score.

IELTS and the Common European Framework of Reference

The CEFR shows the level of the learner and is used for many English as a Foreign Language examinations. The table below shows the approximate CEFR level and the equivalent IELTS Overall Band Score:

CEFR description	CEFR level	IELTS Band Score
Proficient user (Advanced)	C2 C1	9 7–8
Independent user (Intermediate – Upper Intermediate)	B2 B1	5–6.5 4–5

This table contains the general descriptors for the band scores 1–9:

IELTS Band Scores		
9	Expert user	Has fully operational command of the language: appropriate, accurate and fluent with complete understanding.
8	Very good user	Has fully operational command of the language, with only occasional unsystematic inaccuracies and inappropriacies. Misunderstandings may occur in unfamiliar situations. Handles complex detailed argumentation well.
7	Good user	Has operational command of the language, though with occasional inaccuracies, inappropriacies and misunderstandings in some situations. Generally handles complex language well and understands detailed reasoning.
6	Competent user	Has generally effective command of the language despite some inaccuracies, inappropriacies and misunderstandings. Can use and understand fairly complex language, particularly in familiar situations.
5	Modest user	Has partial command of the language, coping with overall meaning in most situations, though is likely to make many mistakes. Should be able to handle basic communication in own field.
4	Limited user	Basic competence is limited to familiar situations. Has frequent problems in understanding and expression. Is not able to use complex language.
3	Extremely limited user	Conveys and understands only general meaning in very familiar situations. Frequent breakdowns in communication occur.
2	Intermittent user	No real communication is possible except for the most basic information using isolated words or short formulae in familiar situations and to meet immediate needs. Has great difficulty understanding spoken and written English.
1	Non user	Essentially has no ability to use the language beyond possibly a few isolated words.
0	Did not attempt the test	No assessable information provided.

Marking

The Listening and Reading papers have 40 items, each worth one mark if correctly answered. Here are some examples of how marks are translated into band scores:

Listening:	16 out of 40 correct answers:	band score 5
	23 out of 40 correct answers:	band score 6
	30 out of 40 correct answers:	band score 7
Reading:	15 out of 40 correct answers:	band score 5
	23 out of 40 correct answers:	band score 6
	30 out of 40 correct answers:	band score 7

Writing and Speaking are marked according to performance descriptors.

Writing: examiners award a band score for each of four areas with equal weighting:

- Task achievement (Task 1)
- Task response (Task 2)
- Coherence and cohesion
- Lexical resource and grammatical range and accuracy

Speaking: examiners award a band score for each of four areas with equal weighting:

- Fluency and coherence
- Lexical resource
- Grammatical range
- Accuracy and pronunciation

For full details of how the examination is scored and marked, go to: www.ielts.org.

1 Family matters

Language development | Nouns for people; Useful collocations

Exam skills | Identifying the main idea; Identifying paragraph structure; Expressing the main idea; Understanding matching headings tasks

Exam Practice | Matching headings

Part 1: Language development

Nouns for people



- 1 Look at the words in the box. Which words can you use to describe the relationships of the people in the photos?

acquaintance boss business partner colleague
flatmate friend great-uncle half-brother mate
relative sister-in-law step-sister stranger

! Watch out

Words that are close in meaning can be confusing and it is important to learn the different meanings.

- 2 Which words in Exercise 1 refer to people ...

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 in your family? | 2 you work with? |
| 3 you know well? | 4 you do not know well? |

- 3 Read statements 1–5 and write T (True) or F (False). Then correct the false statements. Use a dictionary to help you.

- 1 *Guys* and *mates* are words that are used to describe both men and women in informal language. _____
- 2 Your *great-uncle* is the father of your uncle. _____
- 3 *Triples* are three children born at the same time. _____
- 4 The words *half-brother* and *step-brother* describe the same family relationship. _____
- 5 Your *sister-in-law* can be your husband's sister or your brother's wife. _____

Useful collocations

**Exam tip**

Developing your knowledge of collocations will help you to understand the content of texts and increase your reading speed in the exam.

4 Complete sentences 1–4 with the words in the box. Note how they collocate with the words in *italics*.

troubled	extended	non-identical
adoptive	close-knit	close

- Did you know Lizzie has a _____ *twin*? They don't look like each other at all! However, they do have a very _____ *bond*.
- Many people see their _____ *family* regularly, but others only meet up at family events, such as weddings.
- I consider myself fortunate to have such a _____ *family* – we're in contact all the time and get on really well.
- It was sad to learn about his upbringing. It sounds like it was a _____ *childhood*. Though things improved dramatically when his _____ *parents* gave him a home.

5 Read the passage. What is the best title for the passage?

- The modern family unit is very confusing.
- It is important for people to make a will.
- Families undergo many distressing changes.

The modern family unit is becoming ever more complicated, especially when the family is often made up of children from second marriages. A will is the only way to ensure that those you love or are obliged to care for are adequately provided for. After the spouse has received his or her legal share, the rest of the estate is shared by children or grandchildren. If there are none, surviving parents will get a share. If there are none of these, any brothers and sisters who shared the same two parents as the deceased will receive a share.

If your family circumstances have changed, it is important that you make or update a will to ensure that your money and possessions are distributed according to your wishes. For example, if you are married or enter into a registered civil partnership, this will invalidate any previous will you have made.

6 Read the passage in Exercise 5 again. Match the words 1–6 with the meanings a–f.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| 1 <i>will</i> (noun) | a husband or wife, considered in relation to their partner (formal) |
| 2 <i>spouse</i> (noun) | a person who has recently died |
| 3 <i>estate</i> (noun) | a legal document in which a person includes instructions about what should be done with their money and property after they die |
| 4 <i>inheritance</i> (noun) | to make something no longer acceptable legally |
| 5 <i>deceased</i> (noun) | all the money and property owned by somebody when they die |
| 6 <i>invalidate</i> (verb) | money and possessions that are received from somebody who has died |

Part 2: Exam skills

Exam information: Matching headings

This task tests your ability to recognise the main idea or theme of a specific paragraph within a passage, and to distinguish the main idea from the supporting ideas.

You will be given a numbered list of headings and a passage. You will have to locate the relevant information in the passage and match it with the correct heading.

Identifying the main idea

- 1 Quickly read the text below. What is the main idea? Choose the best description.

The text is about ...

- 1 how young children cope with problems in the family and the effect it has on their grown-up lives and relationships.
- 2 family celebrations and gives advice about how parents and their grown-up children should behave when they are together.
- 3 some of the difficulties that arise when the extended family take part in celebrations during a visit to a family's home.



Exam tip

Skim-reading a passage is a good way to save time in the exam. Skim-read the passage to identify the topic sentence and the writer's main idea.

If you're in your thirties or forties and still going back to the family home for every big family celebration, any problems that have developed with your parents over the years are likely to be mentioned. You can easily end up remembering childhood problems and start behaving like an angry child, but you should try to resist this. Meanwhile, parents should remember that they are no longer in charge of their children's lives. Parents need to enjoy their children for who they are now, as adults, rather than behaving like they did when they had more control over them.

Identifying paragraph structure

- 2 The content of a paragraph is linked to its structure. Answer questions 1–9 to help you understand the content and structure of paragraphs A–C.

Paragraph A

Almost half of all grandparents lose all contact with their grandchildren after a marriage ends, according to a new report. It found that 42 percent never see their grandchildren again after the break-up. Even more – 67 percent – are prevented from providing any sort of childcare or taking their grandchildren on outings, even when they had done so regularly in the past.

- 1 The 'topic' sentence is the sentence that summarises the main idea(s) in a paragraph. Which sentence in Paragraph A is the topic sentence?
- 2 Does Paragraph A become more specific (e.g. giving more detailed information) or more general?
- 3 The second sentence mentions *the break-up*. What does this refer to, and why is *the*, not *a*, used?

Paragraph B

The value of grandparents to children should not be underestimated. The report shows the need for the government to address the importance of grandparents in future policy and legislation. It also demonstrates the need to amend the Children Act 1989 to remove the obstacle that requires the biological family to ask permission prior to making an application to the court for contact. Especially when a family is going through difficulties, it is important that the children can turn to someone who is not directly involved and is calm and relaxed, and that person is often a grandparent.

- 4 Which sentence is the topic sentence?
- 5 Which sentence expresses a similar idea to the first sentence, but with more detail?
- 6 The paragraph says *The value of grandparents to children should not be underestimated*. Is this the same as saying that the value of grandparents to children is very important?

Paragraph C

To have a society that is family-friendly, anti-discrimination laws will need to be introduced. Parenting would become a school subject, staircases would be rebuilt so that buggies and prams could access any building and advertising for sweets and non-educational toys would be forbidden. Companies would be forced to only employ people who can travel to work in less than 40 minutes and there would also be a 35-hour working week and more holidays. In a world like this, there would be less divorce and crime, but we would be earning and producing less.

- 7 Identify the introduction, the main part and the conclusion of this paragraph.
- 8 Which of the three parts expresses the writer's main point of view?
- 9 The first sentence mentions a *family-friendly* society. You may know words like *environmentally friendly*, *child-friendly* and *eco-friendly*. What does *friendly* mean in this context?

**Exam tip**

Identifying the structure of a paragraph will not only help you to understand the text, but will also help you to locate information.

3 Which paragraph A–C in Exercise 2 ...

- 1 states cause and effect? _____
- 2 develops an argument? _____
- 3 gives information / a description? _____



Expressing the main idea

4 Read passages 1 and 2. Write one heading to express the main idea of each passage.

1

Nicholson defines the traditional family as 'the unit of parents with children who live together'. The bond between husband and wife is seen as particularly important, and the family feels itself to be separate from other kin. This family group is often referred to as the nuclear family.

2

Traditional families also have disadvantages:

Because both partners now tend to work, they have tremendous time pressures, making it difficult to carry out satisfactory and rewarding childcare.

Traditional families place a heavy burden of expectation on the partners, and, with work and childcare commitments, it may be difficult for them to spend time together.

However, traditional families do have some advantages:

Their small size tends to encourage intimacy between family members, and, when the relationships work, they can be rewarding and long-lasting.

Traditional families can be economically successful because they are not usually expected to share their resources with others.

Understanding matching headings tasks

5 Look at the exam task below and the reading passage on page 13. Then answer questions 1–3.

- 1 How many paragraphs are in the passage?
- 2 How many headings are in the list?
- 3 How many headings will not be matched to a paragraph?



Exam tip

Each correct heading will summarise the main idea of a paragraph.

6 Now do the exam task. The reading passage is on page 13.

Choose the correct heading for sections A–E from the list of numbered headings i–ix below. Write the correct number in boxes A–E.

List of headings

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| i New families: beneficial or harmful? | vi Families: then and now |
| ii The government reaction | vii The first criticisms of 'family' |
| iii The typical western family | viii The 'happy family' model |
| iv Political families | ix The function of families |
| v The disappearance of the traditional model | |

Section A

The family has often been regarded as the cornerstone of society. In premodern and modern societies alike, it has been seen as the most basic unit of social organisation and one which carries out vital tasks, such as socializing children.

Section B

Until the 1960s, few sociologists questioned the importance or the benefits of family life. Most sociologists assumed that family life was evolving as modernity progressed, and that the changes involved made the family better suited to meeting the needs of society and of family members. A particular type of family, the nuclear family (based around a two-generation household of parents and their children), was seen as well adapted to the demands of modern societies.

Section C

From the 1960s, an increasing number of critical thinkers began to question the assumption that the family was necessarily a beneficial institution. Feminists, Marxists and critical psychologists began to highlight what they saw as some of the negative effects and the 'dark side' of family life.

In the following decades, the family was not just under attack from academic writers. Social changes also seemed to be undermining traditional families, as more marriages were ending and many people were choosing not to marry. Other trends all

suggested that individuals were basing their lives less and less around conventional families.

Section D

Some have seen these changes as a symptom of greater individualism within modern societies. They have welcomed what appears to be an increasing range of choice for individuals. People no longer have to base their lives around what may be outmoded and, for many, unsuitable conventional family structures. Others, however, have complained about the changes and worried about their effect on society. Such changes are seen as both a symptom and a cause of instability and insecurity in people's lives and in society as a whole. This view has been held by traditionalists who want a return to the ideal of the nuclear family. For them, many of society's problems are a result of increased family instability.

Section E

Alongside these developments in society and sociology, family life has become a topic of political debate. Politicians have become somewhat more willing to comment on families. Sometimes they have devised policies to try to deal with perceived problems surrounding the family. In short, the family has come to be seen as more problematic than it was in the past. The controversies that have come to surround families and households are the subject of this chapter.

Section A ☐Section B ☐Section C ☐Section D ☐Section E ☐

Part 3: Exam practice

Matching headings



Exam information

There are three sections in the Academic Reading exam, with a variety of questions using different task types. Each part has a long reading passage and a set of questions. There are a total of 40 questions and you will have 60 minutes to complete the exam, including transferring your answers to an answer sheet.

READING PASSAGE

This reading passage has 5 sections, A–E.

Choose the correct heading for sections A–E from the list of numbered headings below. Write the correct number i–viii next to Sections A–E.

List of headings

- i The science of marriage
- ii The importance of honest communication
- iii The power of thought
- iv The likelihood of marrying again
- v Technological advances
- vi The benefits of avoiding arguments
- vii The real predictor for a lasting marriage
- viii The consequences of early dissatisfaction



Exam tip

Underline key words in the headings. Then you can scan the passage for the correct information.



Exam tip

Check your answers. Check that the extra headings do not match any information in the paragraphs.

- Section A _____
- Section B _____
- Section C _____
- Section D _____
- Section E _____

Section A

Marriage is a much-researched topic, and the way married couples communicate in particular has been the subject of many studies. These days, research into marriage often involves hours of recordings, followed by a thorough analysis of data with the help of modern software applications.

Section B

One such study analysed five years' worth of data, obtained from 750 participating couples. At the start of the study, participants who felt they were in a harmonious relationship reported having happy marriages. In other words, low levels of conflict corresponded to a perceived higher degree of happiness. At the end of the five year period, however, many of these couples were no longer happy. The outcome of this study suggests that keeping the peace rather than talking about problems and working through them can have harmful effects on a relationship.

Section C

In a more recent, larger-scale study, people were observed over a 15-year period. The researchers recorded the timings of marriages and remarriages, and discovered patterns that helped them estimate how likely the end of a marriage was. If participants admitted the possibility of their marriage ending to themselves during the first year of the study, the probability of it actually happening was ten times greater than for those couples who had not thought about it at all. Clearly, once the idea of a marriage ending is in somebody's mind, they are more likely to act on it.

Section D

Yet another piece of research confirms that the way men and women feel at the beginning of their marriage makes a difference to its eventual outcome. Those who feel disappointed, perhaps because marriage itself is different from their expectations, or because their lifestyle is not what they had envisaged, are more likely to feel disappointed.

Section E

Having said that, relationships are complex and their development is the result of many different influences. The success or otherwise of a marriage is unlikely to be brought about by one particular factor, and is more probably the result of a combination of small incidents that add up over time. It is also worth bearing in mind that in most countries it is the minority of marriages that fail. No one can truthfully claim that their marriage is happy or perfect all the time, but the fact remains that most married people stay together for life. The secret of a happy marriage, it seems, lies where most people have always thought it does: in the effort made on a daily basis by both partners to treat each other with consideration and courtesy, and to cheerfully accept each other's faults as well as their good qualities.

**Exam tutor**

- 1 When you first skim-read the passage, what are you trying to find out?
- 2 What should you try to identify in each paragraph?
- 3 What words should you underline in the heading?
- 4 Do all the headings have to match with a paragraph?
- 5 Do all the paragraphs have to match with a heading?

2 Health care

Language development | Words related to health care; Useful verbs and nouns
Exam skills | Scanning for specific information; Summarising paragraphs; Completing diagrams; Completing tables
Exam practice | Table completion

Part 1: Language development

Words related to health care

1 Match the words a–f to the photos 1–6.

- a** bandage **b** first aid kit **c** prescription
d surgery **e** thermometer **f** vitamins



2 Complete sentences 1–6 with the correct word from Exercise 1. The answers are singular or plural forms.

- Many people take supplements or _____ in order to maintain good physical health.
- Every home or workplace should have a _____ located in an accessible place and stocked with basic equipment.
- Digital _____ should be placed in the person's mouth to read their temperature.
- Doctors write _____ for their patients which details the amount of medicine to be taken.
- Many patients experience anxiety before having _____ if it is a major operation.
- A _____ should be applied to a wound to support an injury or a muscle.