**IELTS Reading**

1. **Short Answer Questions**

**Tips**

1. The **answers appear in the same order as the text**.
2. Look at and understand the questions first before you start reading the text. What is the question actually asking?
3. You will probably be given a word limit, for example **‘NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER.’**Make sure you don’t go over this limit.
4. As stated above, the answers do not need to be **grammatically correct**, just short answers.
5. **Don’t give your opinion**, just the answer in the text.
6. Keywords in the question will normally be nouns or noun phrases.
7. When you find your keywords always think synonyms and paraphrases.

**Strategy**

1. Read the instructions carefully and note the word limit.
2. Read and understand the questions. Think about the information you will need to find.
3. Underline any keywords in the questions.
4. Think about synonyms or paraphrases for these keywords.
5. **Find part of the text question 1 relates to**.
6. Read question again.
7. Read the section containing the answer **carefully** and identify answer.
8. **Continue with next question and repeat until finished**.
9. **Multiple Choice Questions**

**Top 10 Tips**

1. Read the questions before you read the text.
2. You will often be able **to eliminate 2 of the four answers** and this leaves you with two choices. Think about the difference in meaning between these two choices and this will help you get the correct answers.
3. If you are unsure of what the difference is between two or three sentences, it can help to rephrase them in your own words.
4. If you are **running out of time or you really don’t know the answer**, have a guess. You will not lose marks for wrong answers and you have a 25% chance of getting the correct answer just by guessing.
5. Don’t be tricked by the examiner’s ‘distractors’ especially keywords from the questions that look the same as the text.
6. If you don’t know anything about the topic, don’t panic. It is a reading test, not a test of your knowledge.
7. **Try to predict the correct answer before you read the text**. This will help you find the correct answer.
8. **Before deciding on your answer**, always go back and carefully read the questions before making your final decision.
9. **The answers will be in the same order as the text**.
10. You might be asked about both facts and opinions. Facts are things that are always true or cannot be disproved but opinions are just what people think.

**Strategy**

This is my suggested strategy. There are many different strategies and you should use the one you feel comfortable with. You can also adapt this strategy to what suits you.

1. Read the questions carefully.
2. **Skim** the text to get the general meaning.
3. Underline any keywords in the question and think about any synonyms that might appear in the text.
4. Read the **choices and underline any keywords**. Think about the difference in meaning between the difference choices.
5. Predict the correct answer.
6. Read the text and using keywords and synonyms locate the part containing the answers.
7. Read that part of the text very carefully, thinking about the difference in meanings.
8. Think about not only which options are correct but how the other options are wrong.
9. Go back and read the question again and mark your final choice.
10. **Summary Completion**

**Tips**

1. Try to **predict the answers** before you look at the options or the text. This will help you spot the correct answer.
2. Should the gap be filled with a verb, noun, adjective or adverb? If your answer makes the sentence grammatically wrong, then you have the wrong answer.
3. Look for synonyms and paraphrases in the text rather than words that directly match.
4. **Don’t spend too much time looking** for the answer to one question. If you can’t find it, mark what you think it might be and move on. Focusing on the easier answers is a better use of your time.
5. **The answers normally come in the same order as the questions**.
6. If you get a list of words, think about the ones that can’t be the correct answer because of meaning or grammar. You can then eliminate these words.

**Strategy**

This is my suggested strategy. There are many different strategies and you should use the one you feel comfortable with. You can also adapt this strategy to what suits you.

1. Read the question carefully. Note how many words you can write (normally one, two or three) and if you should get the words from the reading text or a list.
2. **Skim** the summary and try to understand the overall meaning.
3. Try to predict the answers before you look at the reading text. Also, think about the word type (noun, verb, adjective) that should be included.
4. If you have a list of words, try to guess which 2 or 3 the answer might be. Pay attention to words that collocate well with the words in the sentence.
5. Identify which part of the reading text the summary relates to. **Scanning** for synonyms from the summary will help you do this.
6. Look at that part of the section more carefully and choose the correct answer. Remember to be careful with synonyms.
7. Check to see if your word makes the sentence **grammatically correct**.
8. **Matching Sentence Endings**

**Tips**

1. The **answers are in the same order** in the text as they are in the questions, so the answer to question 2 will be after the answer to question 1 and so on. Locate question one first and then you know where to begin.
2. Try to predict how each sentence will end before you look at the endings.
3. **Start with the incomplete sentences first before you look at the endings or the text. There are more endings than required, so looking at all of these in detail is a waste of time.**
4. Think of synonyms and paraphrases that the examiners could be using instead of exactly the same words.
5. All of the sentence endings appear in the text, but you don’t need to read all of them, just the ones that you decide to match with the incomplete sentences.
6. When highlighting keywords, it is often a good idea to highlight any names, including place names, or dates. These are often easy to find in the reading text.
7. Don’t just match words. Make sure the meaning in the reading text matches.
8. **Spend more time on the first question because this is the most difficult**. You have lots of different options for the first question and it will take you more time to work out the answer. The last question should take you much less time because you have less options to choose from.

**Strategy**

This is my suggested strategy. There are many different strategies and you should use the one you feel comfortable with. You can also adapt this strategy to what suits you.

1. Read the question carefully.
2. Read the incomplete sentences first and don’t look at the endings yet. Try to understand what they mean and highlight any keywords especially names, places or dates.
3. Predict what the endings might be before looking at them. Think about what word type (verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs) makes the sentence grammatically correct.
4. **Look at the endings but not in too much detail**. Try to see if there are any obvious answers.
5. Eliminate endings that definitely cannot match. Think about grammar, collocations and meaning.
6. Match the endings you think might be correct. Write two or three options if necessary.
7. Find the correct part of the reading text for each incomplete sentence. Be careful with synonyms and paraphrases.
8. Understand the meaning of that part of the text and choose the correct answer.
9. **Sentence Completion**

**Tips**

1. Check how many words it asks you to write. If it says ‘no more than two’, you can write one or two words. If it says ‘no more than three’, you can write one, two or three words. Remember that numbers written numerically, such as *72* count as one word and hyphenated words, such as *state-of-the-art*, count as one word.
2. **Sometimes the question will state ‘using words from the text’ or ‘from the text’**. In this case you should only use words from the text and not change them or use different forms of the words. If it does not say this, then you are allowed to change the words as long as the meaning is the same.
3. The **answers appear in the same order as the questions**. The answer to number 1 will be above number 2, and the answer to number 3 will be below the answer to number 2.
4. Remember that your answer should be **grammatically correct**. Check the type of word that fits in the space. Is it a verb, noun, adjective or adverb? This will help you answer the question correctly.
5. When **scanning** for your answer, make sure you are thinking about paraphrasing and synonyms.
6. Find where the answer is located in the text before you try to answer the question. Remember **where before what.**
7. Read the questions before reading the text.

**Strategy**

This is my suggested strategy. There are many different strategies and you should use the one you feel comfortable with. You can also adapt this strategy to what suits you.

1. Read the instructions carefully, noting how many words you can write and if they want you to include the exact words from the question or not.
2. Read the incomplete sentences first. Think about what word form can be used and try to predict the answer. Also think about keywords and how they could be represented by synonyms or paraphrasing.
3. Locate where the information is located by **scanning quickly**. If you can’t locate the answer quickly, move on.
4. Read the incomplete sentence again.
5. Study the reading text more carefully to establish the answer.
6. Check your spelling.
7. Repeat with the other sentences.

# True, False, Not Given

**Top 10 Tips**

1. Ignore anything you already know about the topic and don’t make assumptions. Base your answers on the text only.
2. Identify any words that qualify the statement, for example *some, all, mainly, often, always and occasionally.*These words are there to test if you have read the whole statement because they can change the meaning. For example, ‘Coca-Cola has **always**made its drinks in the U.S.A.’ has a different meaning from ‘Coca-Cola has **mainly** made its drinks in the U.S.A.’
3. Be careful when you see verbs that qualify statements, such as *suggest, claim, believe and know.*For example, ‘The man **claimed** he was a British citizen,’ and ‘The man **is** a British citizen’ mean two different things.
4. There will be **at least one** of all three answers. If you don’t have at least one ‘true’, ‘false’ or ‘not given’ you have at least one answer wrong.
5. Don’t skim and scan the text to find the final answer. You will have to read the appropriate part of the text very carefully in order to understand what the author means.
6. Don’t look for words that exactly match those in the statements. You should also look for synonyms. Remember that you are **matching meaning, not words.**
7. If you can’t find the information you are looking for, then it is probably ‘not given’. Don’t waste time looking for something that is not there.
8. If you have no idea what the answer is put ‘not given’. You probably have no idea because the answer is not there.
9. Answers are in the same order they appear in the text. **Do not waste time** going back. Keep on reading.
10. YES/NO/NOT GIVEN questions are slightly different because they deal with **opinion**. TRUE/FALSE/NOT GIVEN questions deal with **facts**.

**Strategy**

This is my suggested strategy. There are many different strategies and you should use the one you feel comfortable with. You can also adapt this strategy to what suits you.

1. Always read the instructions carefully and make sure you know if it is a TRUE/FALSE/NOT GIVEN or YES/NO/NOT GIVEN question.
2. Read all the statements carefully, trying to understand what the whole sentence means rather than simply highlighting keywords. Watch out for qualifying words such as *some or always.*
3. Try to think of what synonyms might be in the text. This will help you identify the matching part of the text.
4. Match the statement with the correct part of the text.
5. Focus on the statement again and then carefully read the matching part of the text to establish if it is true or false. Remember the meaning should exactly match that of the statement if it is true.
6. Underline the words that give you the answer, this will help you focus and you can check back later. Again, be careful there are no qualifying words in the text.
7. If you can’t find the answer, mark it as ‘not given’ and move on to the next question.
8. If you are really unsure or can’t find the answer, mark it as ‘not given’.
9. **Matching Headings**

**Tips and Solutions**

1. **Do this question first**. By doing this you will be able to get the general meaning of the text as a whole and this will help you with the rest of the question that requires you to take a more detailed look at the text.
2. You are not expected to read every word of the text. This will take too long and you don’t have time for this. In this kind of question you are only expected to understand the main idea of each paragraph. A good way to do this is to read the first one or two sentences and the last sentence of the paragraphs. You can also briefly look at the rest of the paragraph but you don’t have to read every word.
3. If there are words you don’t understand, don’t worry about this. Again, you should only worry about the general meaning of the paragraph as a whole, not individual words. Even native speakers will fail to understand every word in the IELTS reading test.
4. Be aware of synonyms. Many students look for words that match exactly with words in the text and ignore synonyms. For example, a keyword in the heading might be ‘Beautiful’, however the word you’re looking for could be many different synonyms of ‘beautiful’ like ‘attractive’, ‘pretty’, ‘lovely’ or ‘stunning’.
5. If there are two or three headings that are similar, write them beside the paragraph and try to find out the difference between the two headings. What are the keywords? How does this change the meaning? Which one matches the paragraph best?
6. If you still can’t decide which one suits best, move on and come back to it later. The answer will normally be easier to find after you have matched some more headings.
7. Ignore anything you already know about the topic. You are being tested on the text only.
8. Don’t read too quickly. Some teachers advise that students should just ‘skim’ the text because you don’t have much time. In my experience, this leads to students not understanding most of the text and making mistakes. It is better to do this a little slower and actually understand what is in front of you.
9. Don’t panic if you know nothing about the general topic of the reading text. The IELTS reading test is not a knowledge test and you are not expected to have prior knowledge of the topic.
10. **Don’t look at the headings first.** This will automatically make you look for specific words in the text rather than the main idea. Remember it is you’re ability to find the main idea that is being tested, not your ability to find specific information. Instead of reading the headings first, ignore them and get the general meaning of each paragraph first by reading the first and last sentences.

**Strategy**

1. If this type of question is on the test, **do it first.**
2. **Don’t look at the headings**.
3. Read the first one or two sentences and the last sentence of each paragraph to understand the general meaning of the paragraph. Don’t worry about highlighting keywords in the test. Try to sum up the general meaning of each paragraph in one or two words.
4. Look at the headings and identify keywords within each heading.
5. Match any headings that are very obvious and you are sure about.
6. For the others, write 2 or 3 headings beside the paragraph. Identify the difference between each of the headings. Establish if there are any synonyms in the paragraph to keywords in the headings.
7. If you still can’t pick one, move one. The answer will often reveal itself later.
8. Repeat until finished.

# 8. Labeling a Diagram

**Tips**

1. Check how many words you are supposed to write, it will tell you in the question. In the example above you can only write ‘one or two words’, any more than this and you will lose marks. Remember that numbers count as one word and hyphenated words like ‘state-of-the-art’ count as one word.
2. Identify the type of word (noun, verb, adjective) you need. This will help you find the correct answer.
3. The **answers do not always come in the same order** that the paragraphs are in.
4. **Do the easiest questions first**. You are more likely to get these correct. If you cannot find the answer to a difficult question, move on and come back later.
5. Try to predict the answer before you read the text. This will help you find the correct answer.

**Strategy**

1. Check how many words you can write.
2. Study the diagram and try to understand generally what is happening. Don’t spend too much time doing this.
3. **Highlight keywords or labels**.
4. Identify the types of words required and try to predict the answer.
5. Scan the text and identify where the information is located.
6. Read in more detail to find the answer.
7. Check spelling.

# Matching Names

**Tips**

1. **Focus on the easy questions first**. If you can’t find the answer to a question, move on and come back to it later.
2. Find the names in the text quickly by scanning for them and then underline them.
3. The names might be shortened to just a first or last name. For example, ‘John Jones’ might appear as only ‘Jones’ in the text.
4. Think of synonyms that might appear in the reading text. For example, the phrase ‘*intense burst of energy*‘ could look like ‘*explosive release of energy*‘ in the text.
5. Some of the names might be used more than once. Check the question for instructions on this.
6. The questions do not follow the order of the text. You might have to go backwards and forwards to find the correct answer. This is a very unnatural way to read and requires you to use your scanning skills.
7. If you like to categorise things by colour, use different coloured pens to underline the different names.

**Strategy**

This is my suggested strategy. There are many different strategies and you should use the one you feel comfortable with. You can also adapt this strategy to what suits you.

1. Read the question carefully.
2. **Focus on the names first. Read** them and then **scan** for the names in the reading text and underline them. Remember that some names will appear more than once and you should underline them all.
3. **Focus on the names that appear only once first because these are the easiest**.
4. Read around the name to see if their findings or research come before or after their name.
5. Read their research or findings and then go back to the statements in the question and match. Be aware of synonyms.
6. When you **find a statement that matches a name, delete the statement**. Each statement can only be used once.
7. Repeat for the rest of the names.

# Matching Information to Paragraphs

**Tips**

1. **Do this question last**. If you do other questions first, you will become familiar with the passage and this will help you identify the correct information more quickly and easily.
2. Try to **find names, place names and numbers** in the questions. These are often easier to find in the text.
3. Be aware that there may be synonyms. For example, you might see ‘*34%*‘ in the question but it might say ‘*just over a third*‘ or ‘*about a third*‘ in the text.

**Strategy**

This is my suggested strategy. There are many different strategies and you should use the one you feel comfortable with. You can also adapt this strategy to what suits you.

1. Read the instructions carefully.
2. **Read the questions first**. Think about synonyms and how you could paraphrase the statements. This will help you identify the answer. Saying each statement in your own words can help do this.
3. **Quickly skim** the reading text to try to understand the general meaning of the text.
4. Read the question statements again and predict which paragraph contains the answer.
5. Scan the text paragraphs you think might contain the answer for synonyms. If you find a possible answer underline it.
6. Check back with the question statement and mark answer if correct. If not, move on to other paragraphs.