IELTS Reading

**IELTS Reading- 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.

**IELTS Reading- Labeling a Diagram Tips and Strategy**

**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.

**IELTS Reading- 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 different 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.

**IELTS Reading – 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 the answer if correct. If not, move on to other paragraphs.

**IELTS Reading 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 your 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.

**IELTS Reading- Matching Sentence Endings Tips and Strategy**

**Tips for Matching Sentence Endings**

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 fewer options to choose from.

**Strategy for Matching Sentence Endings**

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.