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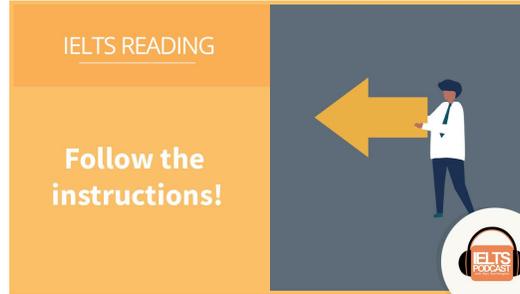
Female Voice: You are now listening to the IELTS podcast. Learn from tutors and ex-examiners who are masters of IELTS preparation. Your host, Ben Worthington.

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INTRODUCTION

Ben: Hello there, IELTS students. In this tutorial, **we're going to be speaking with Kate.** Some of you might be already familiar with Kate once you hear her. She's been correcting essays every now and again for the online course where we offer feedback and students can improve. So, welcome to the podcast, Kate.

Kate: Thank you, Ben. Hi, everyone. I'm really happy to be here with you and I'm ready to share some of the things that I'm sure will help you in the IELTS exam.



Ben: Excellent. Before we jump into that, Kate, could you tell us a bit about your past experience because you were an examiner at one point, weren't you?

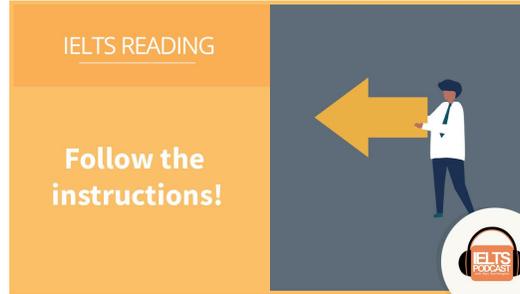
KATE'S EXPERIENCE AS AN EX-IELTS EXAMINER

Kate: Yes. I was an examiner. So, I was a speaking examiner for a very long time and that gave me a lot of insight into how the exam works. In fact, it's less scary than all of us might think. I taught at the university and yes, that's kind of it. **Most of my experience is of course teaching at the university and let's say one-third of it is being an examiner.**

Ben: Very interesting and at the university, you were teaching students lots of different skills I guess and also this included how to pass the reading exam and how to get the reading skills?

Kate: Yes, that is correct. Absolutely, yes.

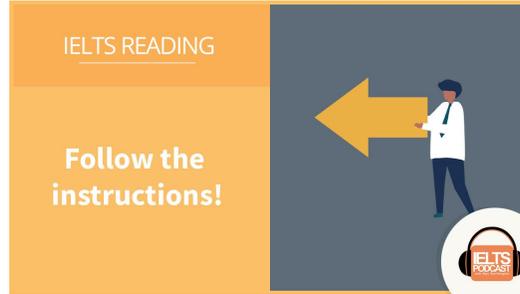
Ben: Super. Super. Yes, because Kate and I, we've been-- well, it's been mainly Kate actually. I'm not going to take full credit for this, but Kate has been writing a book all about the reading. We



agreed the content, what we were going to cover and Kate just jumped right into it and after a period of time, just emailed me the whole book and I was like wow! And it wasn't rushed or anything like that.

It was just amazing, top quality material that we'll be soon releasing on the Kindle Store. It's like an e-book that you'll be able to buy and download. Yes, that's going to be coming out in the next few months, but before that, we're going to talk about some of the content because there's a very important section which Kate wrote which was really interesting actually about follow the *** instructions. We can't say it fully because... yes. So, could you tell us more about follow the *** instructions, please Kate?

Kate: Yes, Ben, sure. The *** instructions are really important. You might think that this is very simple and well, you definitely always know what to do in a question when you take the exam or when you practice the exam, but the issue is that a lot of exam candidates assume that they know exactly what's there in the question and they don't pay attention to the detail and I would

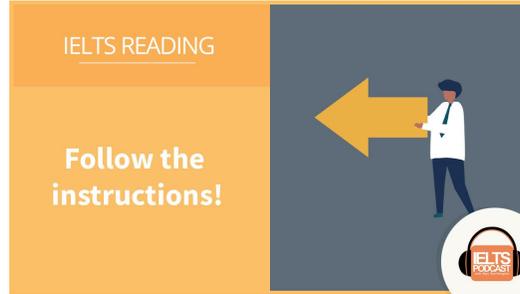


like to remind everyone that IELTS is a tricky exam because it tests your attention to detail and that's a very simple skill in life.

So, actually don't forget that you really have to give those *** instructions a good read. Why? Because the instructions might change. Sometimes it says choose no more than two words from the text. Sometimes it says choose no more than three words and/or a number and sometimes it doesn't say from the text. So, if you don't pay attention to that, you might do the wrong thing. It's like going completely the wrong way.

Ben: Yes and although this might seem quite logical and straightforward; read the question and make sure you are following it, but under exam conditions, logic can go out of the window and this is why I guess-- this is probably why it's really important. You could even pass your finger over each word or say it aloud to yourself just to really make sure that you are following the instructions. So, how did you know, Kate, that this was a very important rule?

Kate: Well, how did I know? I noticed from my exam candidates who would come to me after the exam and they would say, oh my God! I have realized that I didn't do what I had to do. I did

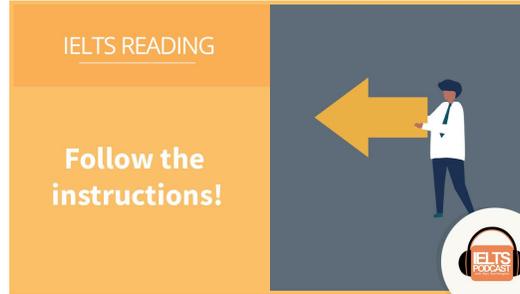


this, but I had to do that. It's like yes, you noticed that too little too late and they realized that they rushed into the question. Rushing and feeling so scared that you don't have enough time is the main cause of not paying attention to a simple-- a thing as simple as the instructions.

So, yes, Ben, you said press your finger over the instructions. I would go even further. I typically say circle the key word, not just underline. Everyone can underline and I saw my exam candidates make the huge mistake of underlining everything. Oh my God! It's just killing me when I tell them read the instructions, underline the key words and they start underlining every second word. Not like that, no. No. That's why I stopped saying underline.

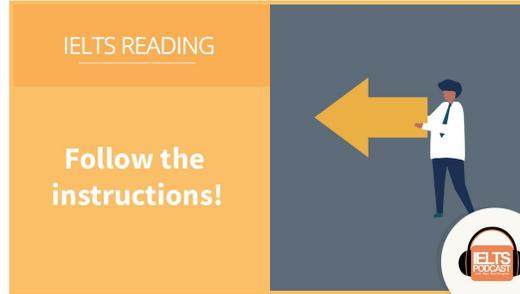
I say circle. It changes something in their minds. So, circle the key word. Circle the two words. **Circle from the text and then say it to yourself. Pronounce it in your mind or whisper it to yourself. No one is going to kill you for whispering to yourself in the exam. No. And that helps you focus and focus and slow down just a bit is exactly what we need in the exam.**

Ben: Absolutely. I completely agree there. Very much and what else can a student do to get ready for the exam and to make sure that they're going to pass this exam, the reading exam?



Kate: The reading exam. Well, **it always depends on how much you have. How long you have until the exam. Do you have two days or three weeks or three months? It greatly depends on that, but I would advise do two things at a time. 1) Expand your vocabulary and 2) practice the timed test. Again, trying to perform under timed conditions is the next best thing to the real exam. That's the closest to the real exam. Shut the door. Tell everyone to just go away. Close the door, sit down, look at the clock, and focus.**

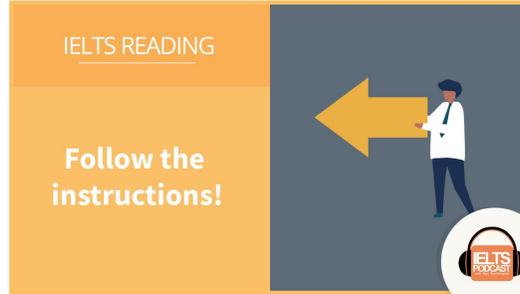
And try to **make yourself go slightly faster every time you take the test the next time.** Every next test, **try to do it a bit faster, a bit more fast** because you have to do it slightly quicker because if you don't develop this ability, you're going to take too long and of course, there's the huge load of other advice, but if I could summarize it like narrow it down, it could be this thing because that's the main issue.



EXPANDING VOCABULARY

Ben: Excellent point. Yes, it just reminds me of what I used to say. Before I ask you about [expanding vocabulary](#), I want to just mention something. If you're starting with this exam, you don't have to complete it in the set time. You can take an hour and a half, maybe a bit longer, and just work through the exam. Get familiar with it. Do it at your own pace and then as Kate said, aim to be shortening the time and doing it faster each time because if you just take it like when they set the exam time and you go through it the first time, you're probably going to come up with a pretty bad score and it's not going to be a very fair score whereas if you get familiar with the exam and then master the certain questions that you are struggling with and then start taking it under exam conditions.

Once you've got more familiar, once you've tried this question types a few times, once you've mastered them, then do it under exam conditions. I found in the past that that's much easier



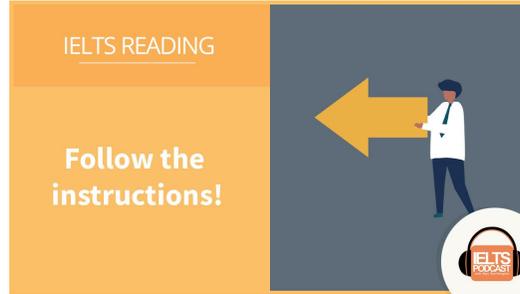
and faster way to improve and also, you're not beating yourself up as much. You got to be a little bit kinder with yourself, so to speak.

TWO WAYS OF APPROACHING THE IELTS

Kate: Yes and allow me to interrupt you. Exactly. The two ways of approaching the exam is getting acquainted with the test questions and all that. I call that practice mode. **There are two modes; practice mode and exam mode.** At first, you practice slowly figuring out the question types if this is completely new to you and that is practice mode. You take it slower. You understand how to think. You learn how to think and then when you get used to it, you take it under exam mode.

Ben: Absolutely.

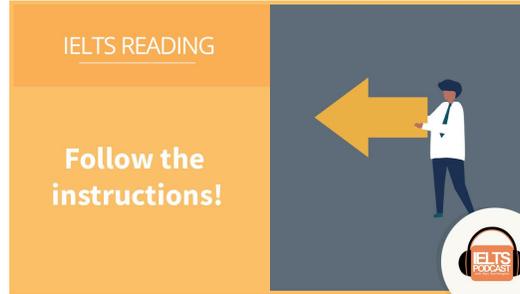
Kate: So, two modes.



Ben: Yes, totally agree there. And you mentioned expanding [vocabulary](#). How do you teach that? How do you teach students to [expand and improve the vocabulary](#)?

Kate: First of all, I tell them to go no further than the previous exam set that they practiced with. I ask them did you extract any new [vocabulary](#) from there and they say no, I just practiced the test. Well, that means you didn't take advantage of the full test. I tell them to go back, forget the timing, forget the strategies, forget everything. Just focus on the words.

Try to absorb everything that you found new. Take from the test. Look at the context. See what they mean. See how they work and then I tell them-- I teach them how to process vocabulary efficiently. I tell them not to make word lists. I tell them not to translate because IELTS is not a translation exam. It's a synonym exam. It's a paraphrase exam. That's why you really need to make sure that you know how to say it in other words, not just how to translate. I tell them to collect synonyms and to make mind maps. I tell them to take their time and learn the meanings, not just focus on just going through the-- rushing through the test.

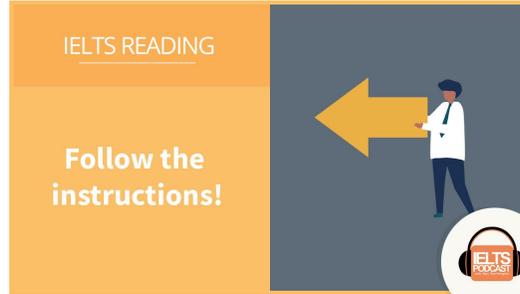


Ben: And you said no making lists, no translating, but just expanding the vocabulary, making mind maps and I guess using the thesaurus as well.

Kate: Absolutely. Synonyms, mind maps, and simple explanations. Pictures where necessary and always get yourself a vocabulary book; I mean a note book where you would collect vocabulary. Take notes, draw pictures, write your synonyms and make the-- connect words by topic, by let's say a synonym like dominant. Let's say the word look and all the synonyms for the word look with tiny notes with what each synonym means and how they are different because-- you don't need to write lengthy definitions. That's [unintelligible 00:13:08.04].

THREE STEPS TO REMEMBER THE WORD

If you want to look into vocabulary more closer and make sure that you remember some vocabulary that will be useful in the next test like lots of academic words and such. **There are the three steps I call it. Define and give synonyms. 2) Find a good example. Find a genuine example from natural English language from a quality dictionary. 3) Get your own example**



with it and then believe me, you don't need to go back to that word any more. Three steps and you will remember the word.

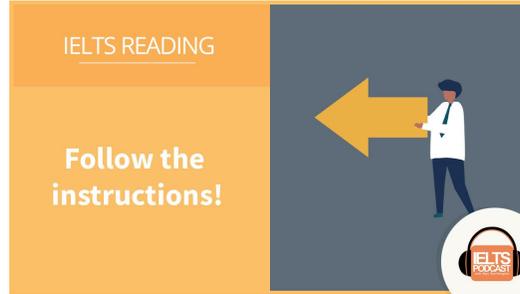
And just one little thing. Don't make effort to remember the word. Don't try to remember it by heart. Just leave it soak into your mind. Study it. Look into the examples and then move on. The brain will do its thing. The brain knows how to work.

Ben: Very, very interesting. Good points there.

Kate: **Don't force the brain. Don't force your memory. You don't have to force it. You simply have to look into it.**

Ben: Got you. Very good. Very, very good points. Now, you sent me the book a week or two ago and I saw that there is a big sort of like appendix of academic word-- from the academic word lists. Can you share more about that and why you thought that would be useful to include?

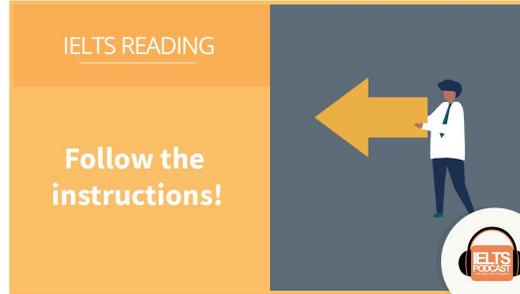
Kate: Yes, as both IELTS academic and general training use reading passages from a variety of topics of general interest, but with a certain shift towards the academic side especially the third



reading passage in general training and all three reading passages in [IELTS academic](#), I thought it would be appropriate to introduce the focus on the academic word list just as I work with it when I taught English for academic purposes at university.

What's the academic word list? That's a certain list of words that turn out to appear in a variety of texts no matter the topic. It doesn't really matter whether it's history, anthropology, medicine, or space exploration. Words like concept or approach or you name it. There are so many that the entire lists will be useful and if you focus on a couple of lists because there are many lists from many sources that will help you no matter which test you're taking.

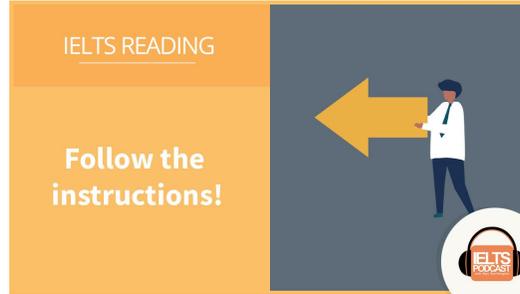
One more piece of advice that I would give here is that you have to learn only one word typically the verb. Let's say conceive, right, which means to understand or imagine. Of course, it means something else too, but it doesn't really matter. But then, if you learn the verb and then you learn the word family of this word like concept or conceivable and you learn them all together, you've learned the whole bunch, but you only have to start from the first one, from the root word.



The root will be different. Sometimes it will change in the noun or in the adjective, but if you learn the main word, you have the whole family and that saves you time. That saves you time. That's another tip for learning [vocabulary](#) that I would give.

Ben: Yes, absolutely plus with English, there's a formula there. It's usually going to follow a similar pattern to get the noun and not all the time because it is a little bit random in some respects, but usually, there is a pattern and sometimes you can just guess it just by being aware of the formula and once you know these formulae, you can expand your vocabulary exponentially rather than just do it in a linear fashion of learning like lists or going through-- so, yes. That's an excellent point there, Kate. What else could or should a student-- a self-study student do when preparing for the reading?

Kate: Well, if the exam candidate has enough time, of course, they should read and they should do that to just develop the ability to cover large or spans of text with their eyes, but that's a background activity. I call that background work. If you have the time, you should do that. If you don't, then, of course, you should try and figure out how the test works and a very important

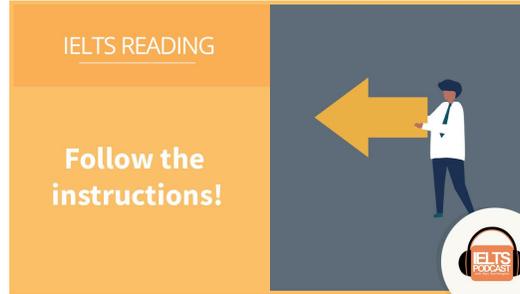


thing that I realized my exam candidates told me and then I added this to my advice later was start from the easy things. Start from the test questions or types that you find the easiest. It doesn't matter which part it is. Section 1, 2, or 3, but if you start with what you can do best, you will do it faster. You will do it more confidently. You will save time and effort. You won't be stressed out.

Ben: And you recommend this strategy for all the tests or while preparing for the test?

Kate: I recommend it for both actually. For both and I know exam candidates who were super at ease with yes/no/not given. The terrible yes/no/not given. The [true/false/not given](#). They said I find it easier. Okay. You like it. You do it. And if you know that you can do it faster than paragraph matching, than heading matching, go ahead. If you start with something that slows you down, it will slow you down.

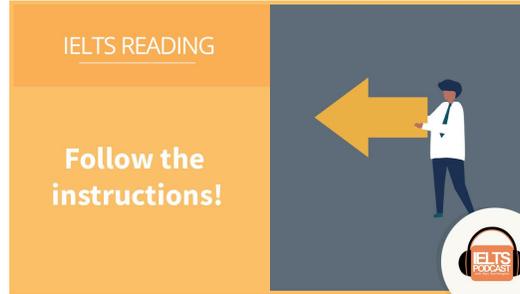
Ben: Right. Got you. That makes complete sense. So, you just go for the ones that you-- the easy ones and then come back and if you've got time, work on the harder ones.



Kate: Yes.

Ben: Good points there. Good points. By the way, listeners, there's lots more of these strategies in the book that we'll be launching very soon and also what I would recommend as well is that you try different strategies so that when it comes to test day, you've tested different strategies and you've found the one that works for you because maybe something I said you tried and it doesn't work for you. Then try something else.

We're talking, Kate and I, from our own experience and from experience teaching and helping lots of students and we've collected a lot of different strategies and it's up to you to find out which ones work for you. I'm pretty certain most of what we're saying is going to work, but just like Kate said though, you're going to have your unique peculiarities and maybe you'll find just like Kate said the yes/no/not given is easy or it's horrible for you. You've got to just find out for yourself and this is what I was talking about with another tutor a while back which is basically taking responsibility for your own learning and finding out how to learn and rediscovering how to learn because a lot of us we haven't been in that--



We just sit down in a classroom and the learning starts. Now, we're self-study students-- so, now that you're a self-study student, it's really critical, it's really important that you find out how you learn as a person and then implement that strategy. So, yes. Kate, is there anything else that you would like to add or anything that you really like about the book that you've just finished?

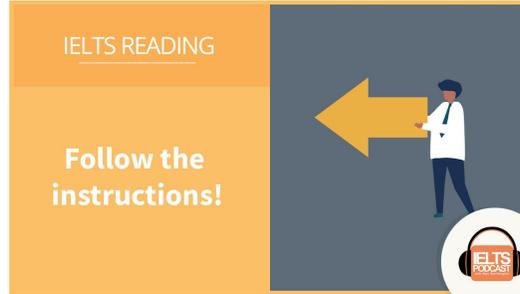
Kate: Well, I like everything about the book because it's the--

Ben: It's my second baby.

Kate: Yes, it's my second baby. The book is an easier baby. Well, I think we're going to discuss this another time remind me if I'm wrong, the golden rule, right?

Ben: Yes, definitely. Definitely.

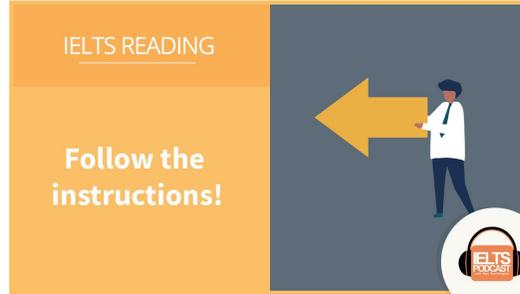
Kate: But, I would still like to start it here because that's so global, that's so important that everyone forgets and that's directly connected to the vocabulary acquisition. Remember that the test contains all the right answers. It's so obvious and it's so simple that no one wants to



believe that and I keep telling them and they don't believe me. if you believe the test-- the reading passage and if you go back to it and find that answer in other words in the actual reading passage and you confirm that oh, yes. My answer is the very same thing, but said in other words, you've got it. Just remember that that's the case. The real answer is always hidden in the actual reading passage. Your business is to find it.

Just go find it, underline it, write the number of the question. It's like oh, this is the answer to question 14 and my answer was let's say option b) or option e) and this is exactly the words that say absolutely the same thing as the words in the answer. Yes, I know. Check. Never go back. The certainty of never going back and you know that it's correct because this is how they plan the test.

This is how they do the test and actually, I'm happy to share that I have attended a couple of seminars where they explain how English tests are designed, be it Cambridge tests or IELTS tests. They are always designed a certain way and yes, there's always a confirmation, a proof in the text and there's always one answer. There is no ambiguity and if you think that both b) and



e) might be the answer, it's wrong. There's always a distractor, but you will lead more about that in the book; about not paying attention to the distractors and all that.

Ben: Excellent. Yes. In the next tutorial that we record together, I'd like to ask you to expand on the golden rule and to expand on the structure of these English tests because that sounds very, very interesting. So, with that, thank you very much, Kate, for joining us today.

Kate: You're welcome, Ben. [unintelligible 00:24:25.10].

Ben: It's very good catching up and just one last thing for the students. if you're struggling with this IELTS exam, as you've probably heard us, we've got resources on the [Amazon Kindle store](#), we've got the online course that's helping a lot of students improve their scores to [Jump To Band 7 Or It's Free](#).

We've also got a lot of materials and resources online at ieltspodcast.com and when you go there and you're looking for your material, you can also [sign up](#) and we'll send you a big jumbo PDF there full of sample essays and tips and all the rest of it.



So, yes, remember as well that if you are struggling, you're not alone. You can come to ieltspodcast.com and we'll be more than happy to help you. So, take care.

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Female Voice: Thanks for listening to ieltspodcast.com

