

IELTS READING

Labelling a diagram



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.

[Music]

INTRODUCTION

Student: To be honest here, after joining this course, I'm feeling much more confident than before. Like before whenever I used to go for IELTS exam I was never confident. I had a lack of confidence. I kind of always knew that I would never be able to get 7, but this time I'm more confident than before.

Ben: Wow! Awesome, awesome.



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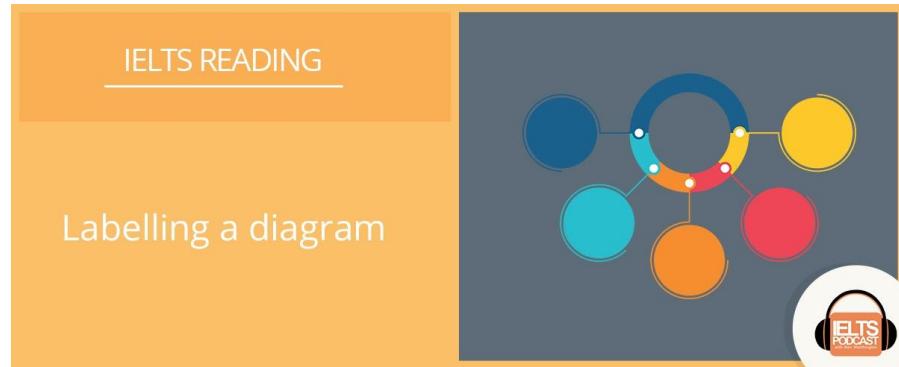


Hello there, IELTS students. Today's tutorial is all about labeling a diagram for [IELTS reading](#).

Before this though, I'm going to give you some very useful valuable insights into the reading exam and then we're going to look at two questions and it's going to be almost a live kind of deduction, a kind of thought process that I've used to ascertain or to get my answers.

And as you all know, I'll just briefly give you a description of myself, my experience for the students who are listening for the first time. So, my name is Ben Worthington. Originally, I'm from Huddersfield in the north of England, the north and that's why you may have recognized a maybe mild northern accent. It has reduced a lot because it's been so long since I lived in the UK because in my final university year, I went to Spain and I went to study and get a degree from Mercia University and I just decided to stay.

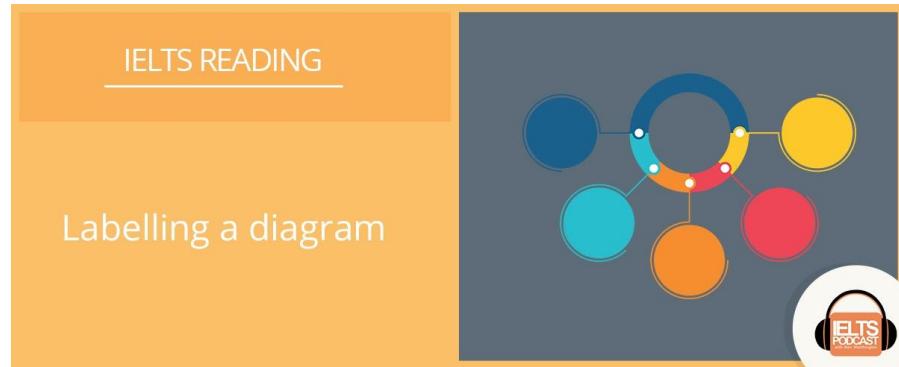
So, I stayed in Spain for a while and then I was moving around and basically though while I was in Spain I became an English teacher. I was first teaching kids, then students and private students



and business students and then eventually, I focused on IELTS students. Why did I focus on those? Because I could measure what was working.

And I'm extremely obsessed by getting results. So, by focusing on the IELTS, I could determine what was working; what techniques were working and because I'm so determined, I was interviewing and I still am experts from different fields; linguistic experts, test writers, ex-IELTS examiners, all these different language professionals and I was interviewing them and I still am as I keep saying. I interviewed them on this podcast. This is how I got started.

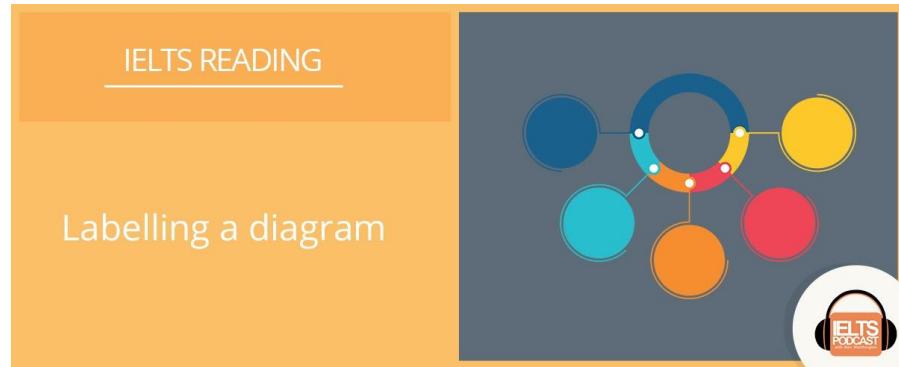
I share the recordings then I test what works with the students with regards to IELTS and if it works, it goes into the program; it goes into our online course. If it doesn't, it gets rejected and that's basically what I've been doing. And I've been enjoying it and thank you for joining me with this and this is how we got the Jump to Band 7 or It's Free online IELTS course which you can check out at our site ieltpodcast.com. And it's been a wonderful ride and we've still got hundreds even thousands of podcasts left to do.



So, let's jump into it. In this tutorial, we're going to look at labeling a diagram for the IELTS reading test. Before we jump into that, we're going to look at a few different techniques or a few kind of tips or pointers or insights that you can use to improve your preparation and then we're going to look at two examples; one from the official IELTS site and then another one. And I'm going to basically walk you through the process I used in order to get the right answers.

Now then, one possible technique to use is to get the official Cambridge IELTS books and get one of the texts from the reading books and then find the answers at the back. Now, look at those answers and search for the answers in the text. This way, you only have to find where the answer is and then underline those words in the text and then once you've done that, you can make a keyword table.

And this helps you to kind of not only get a feel for how the exams are written-- which I will share in a few minutes. I'll give you one insight as to how they are written-- but it will help you develop your finding and understanding skills. So, finding the key vocabulary and then

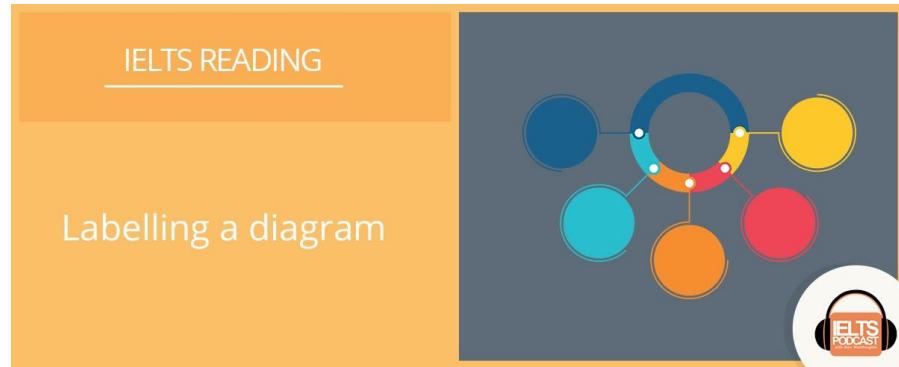


understanding the reason. It's almost like reverse engineering your test and this is a very, very useful technique especially if you're starting out or especially if you've been struggling.

Second technique I want to share with you or the second tip is I've said this before, but when you are preparing for a reading test, at first you just want to focus on accuracy. So, take as much time as necessary to complete that test and then as the test gets nearer and as you get more familiar with the reading test and the question types and the structure, then start working on time.

If you try to do both at the same time like complete a whole test within an hour, it's going to be extremely stressful, demotivating, demoralizing. So, just first work on the test, work on the question types, and then slowly build up your time management skills or your exam time taking skills.

Next piece of advice that I want to work on is break it up. Find an area where you're losing points on and then just focus on that. Do more tests, but just focus on that section and once that



section is up to band 7 or band 8 equivalent, then go back to doing the whole tests again. It's quite straightforward and it's just again breaking it down just like we do with the writing.

When we're doing the online course for the writing, we break it down into so many small stages, work on mastering each stage-- for example, we've got a module that enables you to get ideas for every single question. We've got a module about structuring your thoughts. We've got a module about organizing your thoughts. Every kind of like small stage has been broken down so you can master it and this is exactly the same technique, the same process that we want to use for the reading and for the speaking and for the listening and for the writing as well-- for the reading, sorry.

Now then, skimming and scanning are very common-- it's very common advice, but I found that some students can get a little bit stressed out, so like I was saying before if you can find the information first and then understand the reason for it, it just makes it a little bit easier and possibly even a little bit less stressful.



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We can still use skimming and scanning, but let's try and use it for easier to identify information such as dates, numbers, places; words that generally just don't have synonyms such as city names like London, Amsterdam, Shanghai. Try this technique and this way, it kind of just takes the edge off. It might kind of take the stress off solely skimming and scanning, but try develop those two skills as well and then adopt what works for you. Don't take my advice as gospel, but from personal experience, I found that that piece of advice usually works; using all the techniques I just mentioned.

Now then, final one is try to develop your reading skill so that you're reading phrase by phrase rather than word by word which is too slow or skimming and scanning which can sometimes force you to read too fast. Now, one of the advantages-- sorry-- of reading phrase by phrase is that it's also going to speed you up, but again, don't combine it.

Work on reading phrase by phrase and then once you've developed that, once you've got that ability, then work on the speed aspect so you're increasing the amount of phrases you're reading



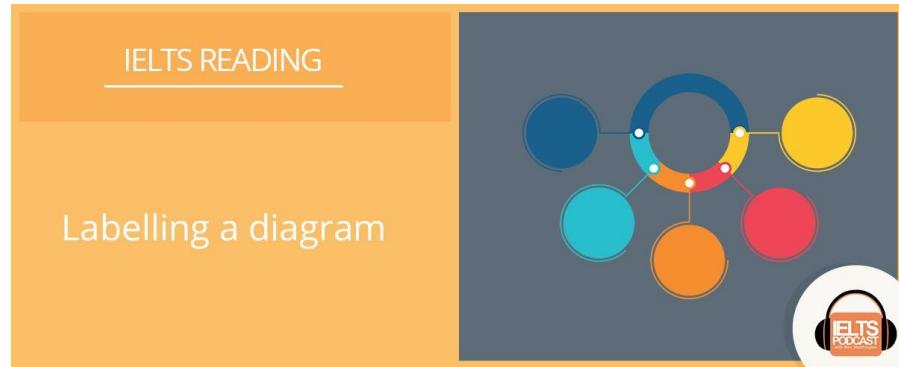
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each time. And again, first work on your comprehension then work on your speed because if you're working on your speed before your comprehension it's going to be incredibly more difficult.

Now then, two more pieces of advice left. Topic research. As I've said before, some topics are a little bit more common than others. For example, education is a very common topic on the reading test. Likewise psychology and-- sorry-- children's development and education in general. These are very common topics. So, it's worthwhile reading about these topics.

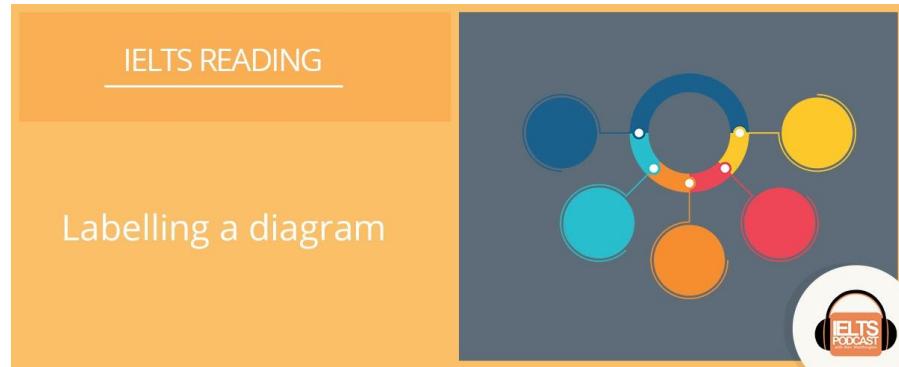
So, you can go to Google and just put [psychology.gov.uk](https://www.psychology.gov.uk) report or [psychology.ac.uk](https://www.psychology.ac.uk) and you can find academic material or if that's a little bit too heavy, you could try psychology BBC and it's going to at least give you an easier to read introduction to the topic and you can boost your vocabulary by employing active reading and just increase your knowledge.



And as you probably heard in previous speaking examples that I've given, being well read which means reading and researching and reviewing and consuming information from lots of different disciplines helps you to boost your vocabulary and your knowledge. Just the other day, I saw a question about the speaking exam about public transport and I remembered a video I saw of Elon Musk talking about how cities are not 3D-- or transportation isn't 3D whereas the city is 3D. You can research that, but it just gave an interesting angle for me to talk about in the speaking.

Now, going back to the reading exam, going deeper into common topics will help you. Another common topic is climate change or environmental issues and I'm assuming as well COVID and biology is probably going to be featured because it's inevitable. It's in every single news report we read or consume today, so it's bound to get into the exam in some way or form.

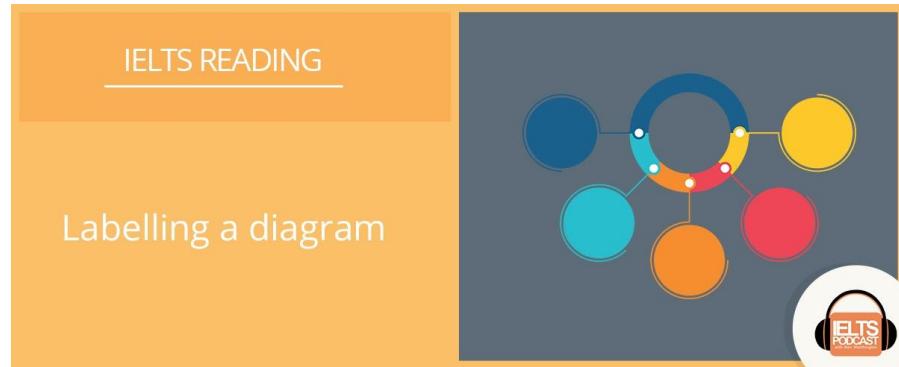
So, research these topics. Review the vocabulary. Start generating ideas. Start asking yourself questions. Start making summaries of the articles and this will help you considerably. A good example of this is in the question that I'm about to answer.



Now, final piece of advice I want to share with you is how the questions are made. So, we find some authentic reading material-- not we, sorry, the examiners and then read a passage and then from that passage a question is formed. I'll give you an example. I'm on the takeieltsbritishcouncil.org site and I've got a page open here about the UK VI test and here's the paragraph.

All British universities and colleges accept IELTS Academic results. This means you may not need to take an IELTS for UK VI Academic test, but you can submit an IELTS Academic result. Now, the question then might be on a key phrase. So, in this case, let's just isolate the sentence. All British universities and colleges accept IELTS Academic results. So, the question could be something like which institutions accept IELTS Academic results?

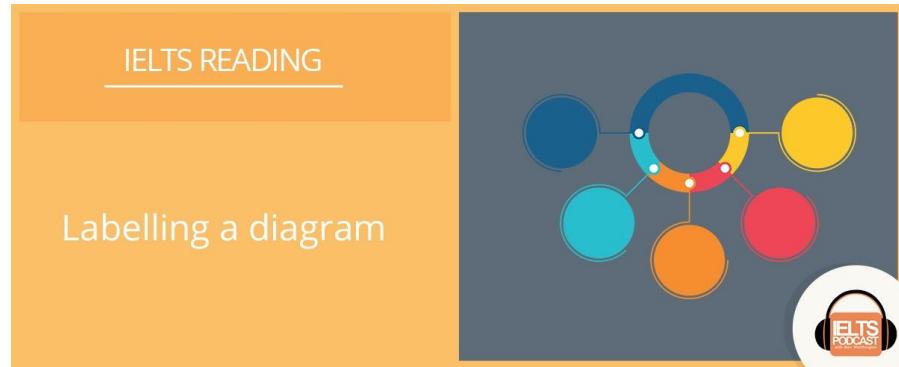
So, here the key phrase would have been universities and colleges, but in the test just to make it not obvious, it's which institutions. So, now we've got to look for something that would be similar to institutions and in this phrase, in this sentence, we have universities and colleges. So,



the key is basically just to find the key word or phrase in the passage and then think of synonyms and it's kind of again reverse engineering the question format.

And I would strongly recommend doing what I mentioned before of like going through the answers first and looking at the text and then really deepening your understanding of the actual test by looking at how the questions are formed. Right. Let's give an example now. Let's work with an example about how to label a diagram.

Now, we have one-- I've got an official test paper taken from the Take IELTS British Council website and it's kind of like a flow chart and it says choose no more than two words from the passage for each answer. Write your answers in box 1 to 3 on your sheet. So, this one is about how a caloric restriction mimetic works. I've got no idea what a mimetic is and I'm just going to-- it's not essential for this question. I've got an idea it's some kind of process, some biological process.



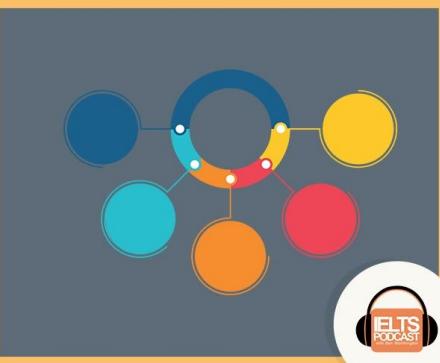
Anyway, it says less one ... is processed less blank is processed. Downward arrow: production of ATP is decreased then two forks or two arrows-- one fork two arrows left and right. Theory 1: cells less damaged by disease because fewer blank are emitted. Theory 2: cells focus on blank because food is in short supply.

So, let's just have a look at the text. I managed to find the answer in this sentence. By limiting food intake, caloric restriction minimizes the amount of glucose entering cells and decreases ATP generation. So, we've got a synonym. We've got less and we've got limiting and minimizes.

So, I kind of know that I'm on the right track. I've found my sentence and I can see here it says less blank is produced and then it says minimizes the amount of glucose entering cells and decreases ATP generation. So, I'm having a guess that's probably going to be less glucose is produced.

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And then for the next answer, we have cells less damaged by disease because fewer something are emitted. Now, because I read a lot and I've built up a lot of general knowledge, I know that another usual term especially with biology is that free radicals are emitted. It's almost like a collocation. That gives me one clue. I didn't realize it immediately, but when I saw the word free radicals, I was like it's probably that and it gave me the confidence just to go back and review the sentence and dig a little bit deeper.

So, again, cells less damaged by disease because fewer something are emitted. Let's check the sentence. One possibility relates to the ATP making machineries emission of free radicals which are thought to contribute to aging and to such age-related diseases as cancer by damaging cells. So, immediately I have one possibility which is synonym or it's broadly similar to one theory or theory 1 and then it says ATPs making machineries emission of free radicals.

So, when I saw emission, I knew I was on to something especially when I saw free radicals. So, let's just go back. It says are emitted. So, we've got the word in its passive form. So, that's



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another clue. We've got two clues already and then the final clue was when I realized it's probably free radicals because those are-- it's like a weak collocation.

So, cells less damaged by disease. Can I find something about less damage? Okay. Yes. Diseases as cancer by damaging cells. So, I had quite a few clues and I can definitely put free radicals as my answer for this with a high degree of confidence.

Next one. Next paragraph. Well, the next question says theory 2: cells focus on blank because food is in short supply. The paragraph I chose-- the paragraph I dug deeper into starts with another hypothesis. So, again that's a clue to say this is the theory. This is another theory which is exactly what I need.

Another hypothesis suggests that decreased processing of glucose could indicate to cells that food is scarce even if it isn't and induce them to shift into an anti-aging mode that emphasizes preservation of the organism over such luxuries as growth and reproduction. Now initially, I did



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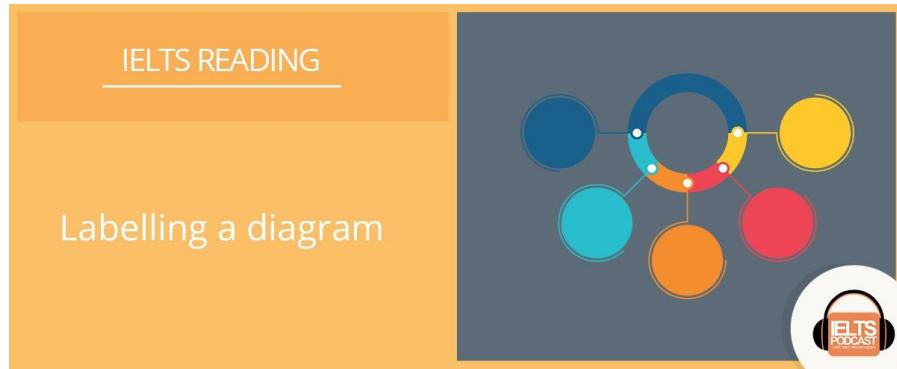
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think-- it says theory 2: cells focus on... and I thought possibly anti-aging because food is in short supply, but then I realized that anti-aging is kind of like-- it's too broad. It's too broad a topic. So, it's probably not that one.

And then it says mode that emphasizes preservation because food is in short supply. Again, what's another sort of like short supply-- another-- well, there we go. Scarce. That food is scarce even if it isn't. So, scarce means that it's difficult to find and here we've got short supply. So, that's one clue and then-- so I kind of said-- I kind of thought as I said it's either anti-aging, but that was too broad and then preservation and I kind of get the confirmation later because it says over such luxuries as growth and reproduction.

So, cells focus on preservation because food is in short supply. And it makes sense. They're not going to focus on growth and reproduction if there's less food there. So, just by working backwards, looking for possible clues, looking for paraphrases and synonyms, we can deduce which are the right answers for this diagram.



Now in the second diagram, I think I was a little bit more fortunate because we have this diagram of an earthworm and we have to label it. Unfortunately, in the text, we've got all the biological names and logically, it has sort of like labeled a name-- it has gone through the process starting with the mouth of the earthworm and then finishing to where waste is passed and likewise, the diagram follows the same process.

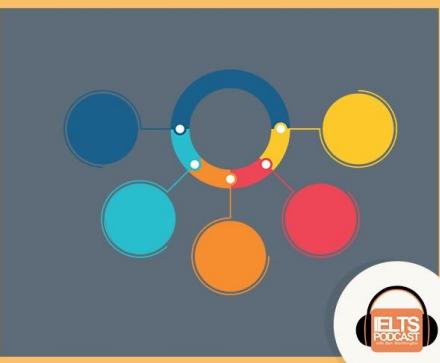
So, hopefully you might be aware of kind of like where the esophagus-- I'm totally butchering the pronunciation. It's been absolutely years since I've used that word, but I remember vaguely that it is related to the mouth. So, in the text, in this one, we are fortunate enough to have the whole process outlined and then it's kind of like a correlation between the numbers in the diagram because obviously, the numbers are not going to go from 1 starting at the mouth to 2 in the middle of the diagram to 3 back towards near the mouth.

So, in this case, it's kind of like common sense and it's possibly quite easier, but you don't want to rely on that entirely. You don't want to guess it, but it does help us. It does guide us, but I



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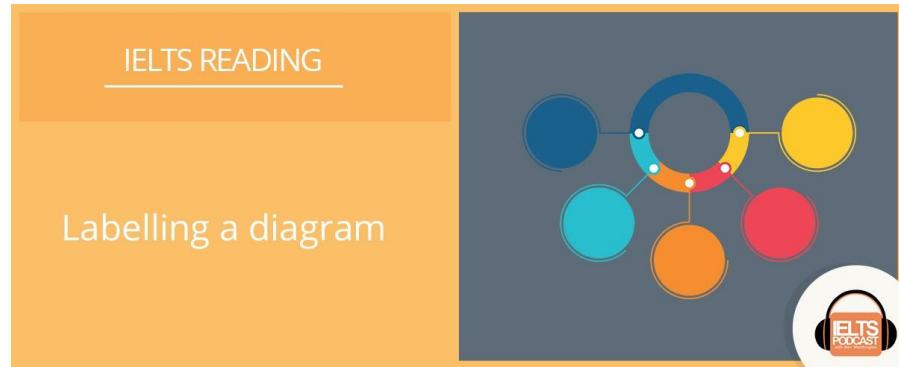
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think the most important clue here is that the order that they appear in the text is generally going to correlate to the order, but it's still worth reading in detail.

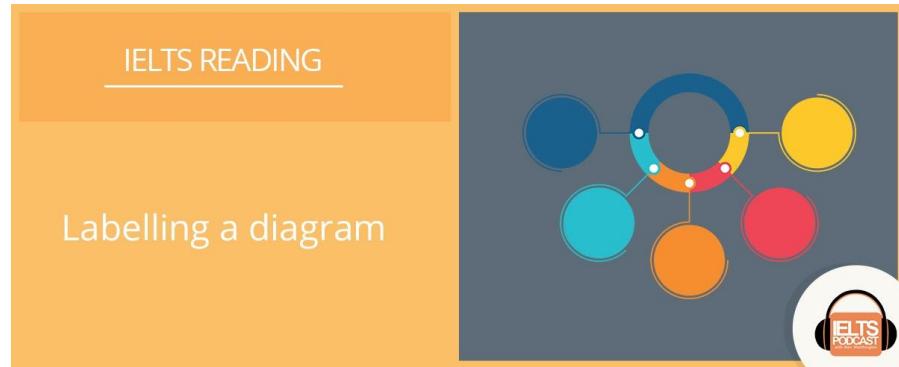
And also, we want again, common sense and deduction. We know that we're going to be in most cases looking for kind of biological words. So, these words are not going to be the most common of words. In fact, the answers range from mouth, pharynx, esophagus, crop, gizzard, and intestine.

Now, three of those words are of Latin origin: pharynx, esophagus, and intestine or maybe Greek and the other three are probably from old English, but either way, we know that these are not common words. They're quite unique. And by reading the text, we can easily get the order from which they appear and we can translate that or move over the same order and put it onto the diagram.



Now then, that's everything that I wanted to mention here in this tutorial. If you are still struggling with your IELTS exam, we have an online course to help you with the reading. We've got online courses for the speaking and for the writing. And for all of those, we're getting fantastic results. That's why we're constantly interviewing successful students who've gone through what you are going through. We're getting the tips from them. They're sharing their advice and hopefully, they're acting as an inspiration as well.

We've had students who've taken the test 11, 12, 13-- I think one student even took it like over 20 times and they did pass eventually. And I would recommend getting proper preparation, getting feedback rather than taking test after test after test. So, if you're in lockdown at the moment, then now is the best time. Take advantage of this opportunity. Get studying. Get those practice papers. Try and implement what we have been talking about in this tutorial and with some work, with some effort, with some guidance, with some feedback, you will get there.



One last thing before we finish. Please remember two things. The newsletter we have. I strongly recommend you sign up to that newsletter and also ask us questions. Send me an email to ben@ieltpodcast.com. Ask us what you want to see on the tutorials. Also, ask us if you've got any questions. Also, download our apps. With our apps, you've got the transcript included as well so you can read along while you're listening, not only help your listening skills but your reading skills and any new vocabulary that you hear you'll get the perfect pronunciation-- almost perfect. If it's not esophagus, then it's going to be near perfect.

Okay. Have a great day. Keep on moving forward and good luck with your exam. Take care.

[Music]

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