



Ben: 9 types of IELTS reading test questions you might see the next time you do an IELTS exam. Hello there. My name is Ben Worthington. Before we get started, let me just say a quick thank you to our new sponsor ELSA Speak at elsaspeak.com. ELSA Speak is an app that you can install on your phone on android and on your iPhone and with this app, you can get instant feedback on your pronunciation.

So, if you're in a pickle that means if you're in a tricky situation, for example, you've got your exam coming up the next day and you want some last minute feedback to improve quickly, then you can install the app and you can talk into it.

So, if you've been writing out your answers as we've talked about in previous tutorials or you just know that you're not so sure about certain words, then you can just speak into the app and it will



tell you which words you're pronouncing correctly and which words you're pronouncing incorrectly. So, it's really useful for that last minute help.

And at the end of this tutorial, I will give you a URL where you can get a special discount and I'll share another tip for using ELSA with your IELTS preparation.

So, in this tutorial, you're going to learn how to tackle features matching questions and also, I'll explain why you shouldn't read every word of the text. And I'm going to give you a load of tips as well to help you push your exam grade upwards.

So, let's have a look. We have multiple choice questions. These are quite self-explanatory. You've got to pick the correct answer from the given choices. The given choices are in capital letters A, B, C, and D and these types of questions just test your ability to understand the detailed and specific information.



The next is information identification questions. These are types of questions that require you to identify whether the information is true, false, or not given. So, this question just tests your ability to understand what the text is talking about.

Now, just as a side note, when you are preparing for the IELTS exam and our successful students the ones that have worked with us have been the ones who have been doing practice tests after practice test after practice test and just really diving in and reverse engineering how these papers are constructed.

So, that means sitting down and maybe even starting with the answers then going back to the questions and then going to the text. You see? And if you do it this way, you can start to get a feel as to how the questions are set up. I remember one of our students he scored a band 9 in the reading and this is the exact technique he used.



Now, another student-- we had a German student and she did something similar-- no. It was a-- I think he was a Colombian student actually. What he did is he did practice test after practice test, but he identified which types of questions he lost points on and then he just found more practice papers and focused on those types of questions. You see? So, two different approaches there.

Let's carry on. The third type can be which paragraph contains the following information. Now, this is not the same as match the headings to the paragraphs. With this one, we're looking for the main idea of the paragraph. And some of these paragraphs might not have any of the answers that you need and then the same paragraph might even have a few answers, okay?

And it's not usually so difficult to understand the question or the answer, but it can be difficult sometimes to find it. Now, with these, you're probably best looking for the easiest information



first and the easiest ones to find might be names, numbers, or dates or maybe even unusual words or technique.

Head matching: this is quite straightforward. It requires you to choose a heading from the selection and then place them next to the paragraphs. I think if you've understood the text, you should be able to get a heading from there. You should be able to match it up. And this is why paraphrasing can be quite a useful skill because you're going to use it in your writing, in your speaking and just being able to paraphrase will enable you to complete the head matching questions in the reading test.

Sentence completion: now, with this one, you're going to find an incomplete sentence and then you complete it with words taken from the test. So, with this, you need to quite quickly map the incomplete text to a particular location in the text so that you can find the right answer.



Now, a good solid grasp of grammar is essential. Now, this is why a lot of tutors say you need to work on your base i.e. your foundational language skills in order to pass the test and then work on your exam skills. I agree with this approach. However, sometimes you can get quicker faster; you can get quicker results just by focusing on the exam skills, but then if you want to carry on improving, you need to go back to the basics and start working on your base again. So, it really is working on both of them.

Gap fill questions. These ones are quite famous. They're usually part of every reading test you're going to get and basically, you need to choose a word from the passage to fill in the summary of the passage below, okay? So, you're going to get a block of text, then you're going to get a summary of it and you're going to have to pick the right word.



Again, this is quite a unique skill to develop and even native English speakers will have to practice this skill. So therefore, it's a clear example of exam skills-- one of the exam skills that you'll have to build up in order to get a high score.

Next: features matching. These types of questions again require you to find specific information about given features. For example, you could be given different people who discovered different things at different times. Now, you're required to match who discovered what at what time.

Now, the next type is called matching sentence endings. With this, you're going to see a list of incomplete sentences and a list of possible sentence endings. Now, your main task is to match these based on the information. There's going to be more sentence endings than beginnings, so you won't need them all.



Now, when you attack these, it's useful to know that the answers appear in the same order in the text as in the order of the list of incomplete sentences. So, you could use a process of elimination to select the right answers. Now, some people say that you can guess the answers. Some people say that you should read all the incomplete sentences before reading the text.

I suggest you test both of those techniques and then find out which one works for you, in which technique do you find you get the highest score. So, if you've got strong grammatical skills then you could probably rely on them and maybe guessing can save you a few minutes whereas if your grammar skills are quite poor, then that technique isn't going to work for you. So, you need to really determine and find out by doing practice tests and by doing different methods which method is going to get you your highest score.



Another type of question is the short answer questions. To be honest, they are not that common and they're relatively straightforward, so I wouldn't worry about it that much.

Now, let me just share a few possible exam skills that are worth developing for the test. Now, we've said practice test is often a very powerful useful way to improve your score. Another way is to develop your reading speed and very briefly what you can do is instead of going word by word i.e. sort of like bouncing one after the other, you can start extending that so your eye gaze takes in three words at a time.

For example, if the sentence has nine words, you're doing three bounces of three words each to make nine words instead of nine individual bounces. Now, this is the beginning of improving your reading speed.



Now, what you'll find though is that you can probably do this technique quite effectively the first time you try it, but you may not comprehend as much as you would normally. So, it's a case of developing this skill.

However, when you do develop it and you start doing it automatically, you start using it when you're reading a sign in a shop, for example, you start reading it when you're looking for directions on your phone and you're just like okay and it can really improve your reading speed.

So, just again, you're looking at three words at once and then the next three words and then the next three words. I've been doing this a while now and sometimes when I'm in a rush, I can extend it to like five words at a time, but I do find that my comprehension falls significantly if I push it past five.



When I'm reading normally, I'll do it at three words per jump just out of habit. And it's one of those useful skills that carries over not just from doing the exam, but you can use it at work, when you're studying, and in everyday circumstances.

Now, the other tip is vocalization. What a lot of people do is when they're reading is that they will whisper the words to themselves or they'll even say the words. Now, your speaking speed is not as quick as your visual speed. So, this goes back to looking at three words at a time and sort of like ending this sub-vocalization and just looking at the words, getting the meaning, and then moving on rather than saying each word individually.

Now, I would recommend first developing this technique and doing it very slowly and checking your comprehension at the same time because there's no point blasting through a text and then not remembering a single word.



So, first you read using this technique and then once you're starting to get a hang of it, you can use a pencil and then sort of like do three taps on the page or every three words just move it to guide your eyes. And also this way, you can force yourself to start reading faster just by moving the pencil along, but again, it's a careful balance between speed and comprehension.

And there are a lot of apps online available to help you develop this skill. One of them which is my favorite and sometimes I use it to just get through a ton of text that I need to read is called ZAP Reader. Just put ZAP Reader into Google and then once you're at that page, you just go to tools in the top right. You don't need to buy the software.

Just go to tools and what you can do there is copy paste a load of text into this web app and it'll divide it up and you can choose three words or five words at a time and it will show you those



words on the screen and you can increase or decrease the speed. And you'd be surprised how fast sometimes you can go and I'll put a link to this tool in the blog post.

Now, as you heard me before saying doing practice papers is a solid way to improve, do not go to an IELTS academy or any like private language school and then sit there and do reading tests. If your academy is doing that just get out of there. You're wasting your time and they're wasting your money. You can do the practice tests at home and also you can obviously do it with the books that you buy online, the old practice papers. The IELTS Cambridge ones are said to be slightly harder than the standard IELTS paper, so that's probably a good place to start.

You can also do reading tests online and you don't have to just do specifically IELTS reading tests. You can look for Cambridge First Reading tests and you can even just do general reading tests because at the end of the day, there's only going to be a limited amount of test papers you



can do especially if you're not buying the books and you really don't want to burn through those and memorize the answers.

So, if you've got the time, start with probably normal standard reading tests or standard IELTS tests and then mix it up with some Cambridge First Reading test or Cambridge Advanced Reading tests and also just general online reading tests. And then as you get closer to your official exam date, start to do more official papers.

Now, I used to work with a tutor who when he was teaching this he used to give the students just 40-- no, I think it was like 30% less time than the official exam time. So, it's something like 40 minutes. And his logic was well, if they can do it in 40 minutes, when it comes to the exam, they'll be able to do it easily because they've got an extra 20 minutes.



Now, it might seem logical. However, I would strongly recommend taking an hour and a half or two hours and just methodically working through the paper first, getting a feel for it, identifying the questions, and just working at your own pace and figuring out how they construct the questions, how they set the questions up, do a few of those and then nearer your exam date, try reducing the time.

This way, you get a feel for it and then you can start speeding up the skills you've developed rather than jumping into the deep end as we say. Rather than just stressing yourself out and trying to do it in those 40 minutes. So, try both techniques and see which one works best for you, but I would strongly recommend just breaking it down first into smaller components, mastering those, and then moving on to the next the next section of the test.

One final tip is that if you're stuck on a question especially if you're doing the timed test or it's actual exam day, then just move on. Just make a note in the margin or write it down just the



number and then come back to it later. This way, you're not going to lose time just working and working and working on one single question. Just keep moving.

I think what a lot of students find is that they get into a rhythm and that they know that they've got to keep that rhythm in order to finish on time. So, this is why it's useful to do the practice papers, get a rhythm going and then get into the habit of skipping the questions you don't know and then maybe going back to them if you've got time at The end of the exam-- if you've got time once you've finished your paper, sorry.

Now, before we finish, I just want to say a big thank you to Ranjit. He is progressing through the writing course and his essays seem to be getting better and better, so well done, Ranjit. And also a big thank you for Tazhan for progressing with his course as well and getting some essay corrections and getting feedback because at the end of the day, that's how we improve.



Now, at the beginning of the tutorial, I mentioned how you can use ELSA to improve your score. Well, if you go there, if you download the app onto your phone, you can start using it to get some instant feedback on your pronunciation that you can even judge your level like get some feedback on what level you're at and this is quite useful when you're preparing for the exam because you want to know if you have improved before you book your next exam especially if you're just focusing on the speaking.

For example, perhaps you've got band score 6 and for your university application you need band score 7, there is no point in going back and booking an exam until you are confident and certain that you have improved. And getting feedback with your pronunciation using this app could be one of those sort of like stacking the deck; one of those little things that you do in order to improve your chances of getting the band score you want.



Now, I also mentioned that if you use this link elsaspeak.com/inf/ieltspodcast you can get up to 85% off the lifetime offer and 40% off the one year offer. So, that's elsaspeak.com/inf/ieltspodcast/. This way, you can improve your speaking. Get that instant feedback and this is probably quite useful especially if you're in an area where it's difficult to get a hold of tutors.

So, that's it from me today. If you need more IELTS help, then remember to go to ieltspodcast.com. You can sign up there for more free IELTS materials including model essays, sample questions and also remember we've got the online course of Jump to Band 7 or It's Free. We've seen some terrific results with that and we've also got the IELTS Speaking Confidence course. So, have a look at those if you're struggling and please get in contact. We'd love to help you out. Have a great day and all the best.



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