



IELTS Academic Reading first lesson

Look at the IELTS Academic Reading paper your teacher gives you and discuss what you would do from the minute you open the paper, and in what order.

Discuss the suggestions under the folded line. Which would you do, and in what order?

Read the text through quite carefully once, re-reading sentences and paragraphs you don't understand

Read through the text for general understanding

Read through the text to get an idea of where the information is, i.e. the paragraph structure

Underline the information that will help you answer the question

Underline words in the instructions

Make sure you aren't answering the example question which already has the answer

Read through the whole text again

Check that the other options aren't possible

Cross out the impossible options

Transfer your answers to the answer sheet

Underline words you don't understand

Choose which question to answer first

Come back to a difficult question later

Guess

Write information to help you if you need to guess later

Look at the suggested answer on the next page and then discuss with your partner if there are any differences to what you said and if you would approach the paper in exactly that way.



Tactics in the IELTS Academic Reading test

Some people prefer to start on the questions straightaway without reading through the whole text. It is also debatable whether it is better to look at the questions before you read through the whole thing quickly or not. If you do read through the whole thing first, it is important to take no more than 3 or 4 minutes. Unlike real life reading, this should be done with the purpose of getting to know where the information is rather than understanding what you read, for example by only reading the first couple of sentences of each paragraph. You shouldn't bother reading again at this point and you certainly should never underline words you don't understand, because it might well be that you don't need to understand that word or sentence to answer the questions.

If you have read through the text first, you will often find that when you look at the questions one of them jumps out at you because you already know the answer or at least where that information is in the text. You should do this question first. With most kinds of tasks, you will then have more idea of where the information to answer the other questions is because the questions are usually in the same order as the text. You should therefore underline the information that could help you answer the question each time. This is usually a sentence or just a few words.

If you are not sure of the right answer, crossing out wrong options is always a good idea. If you still can't decide, you could guess right away or come back to it later if you have time. In the latter case, there is a danger that you will have forgotten your thought process by the time you come back to it. It is therefore best to write something such as a question mark next to possible answers to help you remember. In any case, you should always guess rather than leaving blanks on the answer sheet, even if that means writing random words!

You don't have any extra time at the end of the exam to transfer your answers, so for time management reasons it is probably best to do so after you finish each text. You can still easily change those answers with a pencil and eraser if you need to.

If you have time after doing all 40 questions in the test, you could double check that the other options aren't possible. This is most useful with matching tasks, e.g. taking the paragraph heading that you haven't used and checking that it really doesn't match any of the paragraphs.

Match the headings below to the paragraphs above and number them. Two headings are not needed.

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|
| A. Time management | Paragraph number _____ |
| B. The first question | Paragraph number _____ |
| C. Guessing | Paragraph number _____ |
| D. Double checking | Paragraph number _____ |
| E. What to do first | Paragraph number _____ |
| F. Transferring your answers | Paragraph number _____ |
| G. Wrong answers | Paragraph number _____ |



Match the statements to the different IELTS Academic Reading tactics. You only need to use each one once.

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1. It is different from everyday reading | A. Checking the other options |
| 2. You must not do this ever | B. Reading through the whole text |
| 3. It helps you find information for other questions | C. Underlining the answer in the text |
| 4. It helps you guess later | D. Marking unknown vocabulary |
| 5. You should probably do it as you go along | E. Transferring your answers |
| 6. You should leave it until after the whole paper | F. Writing symbols etc on the paper |

Complete the gaps with no more than two words or numbers.

- You should spend fewer than _____ minutes to read through the whole text.
- You should _____ underline the information that helps you answer the question.
- You can use a _____ to indicate to yourself that it might be the right answer.
- It _____ possible to change the answers on the answer sheet later.
- You could double check the other options _____ finishing all 40 questions.

Do the following statements agree with the views of the writer? Write:

- YES if the statement agrees with the view of the writer.
NO if the statement contradicts the view of the writer.
NOT GIVEN if it is impossible to say what the writer thinks about this

- You should read through the whole text first.
- If you read through, it should be for general understanding.
- You never have to underline two sentences to answer just one question.
- It is recommended to transfer all your answers at the end of the test.
- Rechecking the other options is most helpful for matching tasks.

Look at the questions above again and underline the important words in the instructions for each task.

What would your tactics be for these kinds of tasks in the exam? What makes each one difficult, and what is the best way to tackle it?

Do the same (underlining important words in the instructions and discussing tactics) with the IELTS past paper that your teacher gave you at the beginning of the class.

Discuss any tasks that were in the past paper and not in this worksheet (e.g. completing a diagram, short answers or multiple choice) as a class.

What are the best ways of improving your IELTS Academic Reading skills?



Choose a top five from this list:

- ◇ Reading newspapers
- ◇ Reading news magazines like Newsweek and Time
- ◇ Watching documentaries
- ◇ Reading Wikipedia and other encyclopedias
- ◇ Learning academic vocabulary with a self-study book like Academic Vocabulary in Use
- ◇ Reading English-language textbooks
- ◇ Reading academic journals
- ◇ Doing lots of test papers
- ◇ Doing the same test paper again later to revise the vocabulary
- ◇ Reading fiction
- ◇ Reading popular science magazines
- ◇ Using an IELTS textbook
- ◇ Using an IELTS vocabulary book

How should you go about reading those things?

What should you do after you do an IELTS Reading exam task at home?

How can you choose which vocabulary is and isn't suitable to learn?

Look at the list of GCSE geography vocabulary or the GCSE geography reading that your teacher gives you and predict which words aren't in an advanced learner's dictionary. You will get one point for each you choose word that isn't in the dictionary and lose one point for each word that is.



Answer key

- A. Time management – Not needed (Paragraph 4 is more specific and mentions other topics such as changing answers)
 - B. The first question – Paragraph 2
 - C. Guessing – Paragraph 3
 - D. Double checking – Paragraph 5
 - E. What to do first - Paragraph 1
 - F. Transferring your answers – Paragraph 4
 - G. Wrong answers – Not needed
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1. It is different from everyday reading - B. Reading through the whole text (“Unlike real life reading...”)
 2. You must not do this ever - D. Marking unknown vocabulary (“you certainly should never underline words you don’t understand”)
 3. It helps you find information for other questions C. Underlining the answer in the text (“you will then have more idea of where the information to answer the other questions is”)
 4. It helps you guess later- F. Writing symbols etc on the paper (“write something such as a question mark next to possible answers to help you remember”)
 5. You should probably do it as you go along - E. Transferring your answers (“You don’t have any extra time at the end ...it is probably best to do so after you finish each text”)
 6. You should leave it until after the whole paper - A. Checking the other options (“If you have time after doing all 40 questions in the test”)
 7. You should spend fewer than five minutes to read through the whole text.
 8. You should always underline the information that helps you answer the question.
 9. You can use a symbol/ mark to indicate to yourself that it might be the right answer.
 10. It is possible to change the answers on the answer sheet later.
 11. You could double check the other options after finishing all 40 questions.
 12. You should read through the whole text first. NOT GIVEN (“Some people prefer to start on the questions straightaway without reading through the whole text”)
 13. If you read through, it should be for general understanding NO (“rather than understanding what you read”)
 14. You never have to underline two sentences to answer just one question. NOT GIVEN (“This is usually a sentence or just a few words.”)
 15. It is recommended to transfer all your answers at the end of the test. NO (“You don’t have any extra time at the end of the exam to transfer your answers, so for time management reasons it is probably best to do so after you finish each text”)
 16. Rechecking the other options is most helpful for matching tasks. YES (“This is most useful with matching tasks”)