

How can I improve my score?

A IELTS Reading Tips: How can I improve my score

Below are some IELTS reading tips about how you can improve your score. The tips include developing both IELTS reading exam skills and also improving your English.

IELTS Reading Tips: How to Increase your Score

- 1. Develop skills of each type of question in reading.** There are around 14 different types of questions and you need to find a strategy to tackle each one. Some question types have answers that come in order and others do not. This type of information will help you not only save time but also locate the right answers.
- 2. Skimming and Scanning.** You should be able to skim and scan passages to do well in IELTS. Skimming is reading a passage to get a general idea of the content. This is recommended to do before you tackle the questions. All types of questions, except one, are given after the passage because it is recommended to skim read the passage before the questions. This does not mean you try to understand the passage. It's just a chance to get a sense of the topic and layout. You should skim read the full passage in 2 to 3 minutes – not longer. At the same time, you should underline any key words you see. The only types of questions which comes before the passage is matching headings, for those, you don't need to read the passage first. Scanning is your ability to locate information quickly and has no relation to comprehension of the passage.
- 3. Develop your speed reading skills.** This test has a strict time limit which will really challenge your ability to complete the questions in time. You must develop speed reading skills to be able to find your answers quickly. This means you must be able to scan the passage quickly to locate information.
- 4. Don't try to understand the full passage.** Your task is to locate answers only. Most questions test your ability to locate specific information given to you and then to comprehend the sentence or sentences which contain that information. There are only two types of questions which will require a more detailed understand of the whole passage – matching headings and choosing a title. All other questions are based on locating information.
- 5. Developing vocabulary.** This is one of the key reasons why students don't get the score they need. Learn vocabulary is not just about learning the meaning of a word, it is about learning when you can and can't use a word. It is also about what collocations can be used with words, for example verbs and match nouns. You should write words lists that include common paraphrases and also any problems you had finding the answer. You can do this by learning vocabulary from practice reading passages.
- 6. Key words.** Each question will have key words to help you locate the information in the passage and to spot the right answer. You should learn to spot key words and use them correctly. You should also check whether the key words can be paraphrased. You will soon learn to use key words correctly when you review your answers in practice reading lessons. Some key words are obvious, for instance names, dates, numbers, places etc. Other key words are more subtle.
- 7. Grammar.** Question types such as summary completion and sentence completion require that the sentence is grammatically correct when you have put the answer in. This means that grammar can help you to spot the right answer. Many students post question on this blog asking me why one answer is correct and the other is not – the reason is often grammar related. You will see this when you do practice reading lessons.

- 8. Practice makes perfect.** Unless you practice regularly, you won't improve. The GT test and academic test are aimed at building skills, understanding of question types and also vocabulary.
- 9. Getting used to difficult passages.** If you have time before your test, you should be widening your reading skills and familiarity of complicated passages on a range of topics. read the BBC news, the new scientist, the economist etc.
- 10. IELTS Practice Reading Tests.** You can find practice tests online for free or you can buy the IELTS Cambridge Test books. You should use IELTS practice reading tests for two purposes:
 - a.** To develop your skills, practice different types of questions and enhance your vocabulary;
 - b.** To test yourself under exam conditions to check your score and check if you have developed or no.
- 11. GT Test.** The first two passages in the GT test are different to the academic test but the third passage is similar. To practice the first two types of reading passages, you can practice reading materials such as instruction manuals, schedules and employment terms. You can find practice tests in the IELTS Cambridge books. The same skills and question types apply to both the GT test and academic test so all lessons on this blog will be useful to Gt students.
- 12. Know your weaknesses.** Unless you know your weaknesses, you won't know how to improve. You must check the reasons why you are getting your answers wrong or right. If you are getting answers wrong due to your understanding of the passage, then you know you must improve your English language. If you are getting your answers wrong because you couldn't find the information or you didn't understand the question or you ran out of time, then the problem is your technique and strategies. Spend time reviewing your performance.
- 13. Be realistic.** If your level of English is not strong, don't expect to get band score 7.
- 14. Plan your training for IELTS reading.** You should spend time
 - a.** developing vocabulary and paraphrasing limitation
 - b.** practicing particular question types
 - c.** developing speed in locating information
 - d.** doing practice test not under exam conditions so you can work on skills
 - e.** doing practice tests under exam conditions to test your score and improvement
- 15. You must prepare.** Like all tests, you need to prepare. Even native speakers need to prepare by learning about the different types of questions and developing the right skills.