

Introduction

In the IELTS Academic Reading module there are three passages which are from various sources like books, journals, magazines and newspapers. The passages do not require specialist knowledge for you to understand them. At least one of the three passages contains a detailed logical argument.

The question types used are:

- choosing suitable paragraph headings from a list
- identification of information using 'True/False/Not Given' questions
- identification of writer's views/claims using 'Yes/No/Not Given' questions
- multiple-choice
- short-answer
- sentence completion
- notes/summary/flow-chart/table completion
- labelling a diagram
- classification
- matching

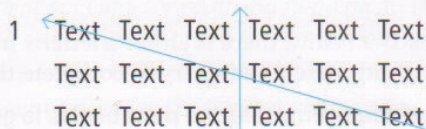
You will have one hour to answer 40 questions, which is about 90 seconds for each question. This means that you need to learn to move around the reading passage and the questions quickly. In the exam there is no time to 'study' the reading passages. In order to be as fast as possible there are three important strategies that you need to learn:

- scanning and skimming – these are reading skills that you need to employ at different times to answer various types of questions
- understanding the different questions types
- understanding when to leave questions you cannot do initially, move on and come back later

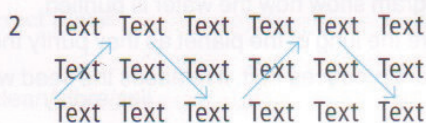
Scanning a text

You can use scanning to look for words and paraphrases of words. How you find the words does not matter, and if you scan from left to right it is difficult to stop your brain from reading. Try the following methods, using a pen or pencil to guide your eye.

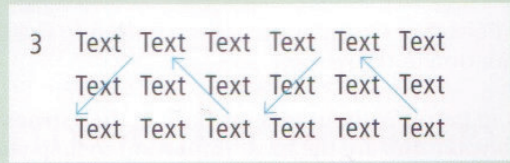
- 1 Scan from the bottom up through the text, looking left to right or right to left.



- 2 Scan in a zigzag from left to right.



3 Scan in a zigzag from right to left.



Below is an extract from a reading passage. Scan the paragraphs for the words below.

- 1 linear 2 sacred 3 elite 4 symbolic 5 complicated

THE BRONZE AGE: XIA DYNASTY



The Bronze Age in China refers to the period between about 2000 and 771 BC, when bronze was produced on a massive scale for weapons and ritual objects used by the ruling elite. Traditional Chinese histories, written in later centuries, speak of a series of ancient rulers who invented agriculture, writing, and the arts of government. The last of these legendary rulers, Yu, is credited with controlling floods and founding the Xia dynasty. Yu also cast nine sacred bronze vessels that became symbolic of the right to rule, and these were passed on to subsequent dynasties. While the account in the traditional histories is linear, with states

following one another in a logical progression, the archaeological record reveals a more complicated picture of Bronze Age China.

Archaeological investigation has confirmed much of the legendary history of the dynasty following the Xia – the Shang – but the existence of Xia itself is still debated. Today Chinese scholars generally identify Xia with the Erlitou culture, but debate continues on whether Erlitou represents an early stage of the Shang dynasty, or whether it is entirely unique. In any event, new prototypes emerged at Erlitou – in architecture, bronze vessels, tomb structures, and weapons – that greatly influenced material culture in the Shang and subsequent Zhou dynasties.

Skimming a text

Skimming involves moving over the text quickly without engaging deeply in order to get a general understanding. Work in pairs. Read alternate sentences in the text above only using the nouns and verbs and see how much you can understand.

Ready for Reading

Understanding 'True/False/Not Given' statements

'True/False/Not Given' statements are used to check if statements agree with information in the reading passage.

- 1 Work in pairs. Without looking back at the extract on page 85, underline the words which you think are the most important to help you understand the meaning in the 'True/False/Not Given' sentences 1–10 below. Use the list a–j to help you identify the important words.

- a verbs to do with cause and effect, for example, *lead to, bring about*
- b restricting words, for example, *only*
- c quantities, for example, *all, majority, little*
- d adjectives that qualify, for example, *particular, inevitable, mistaken, higher*
- e adverbs that qualify, for example, *largely, slightly*
- f numbers
- g 'negative' verbs, for example, *ignore, fail*
- h verbs/phrases that indicate doubt, for example, *suggest: It is suggested ...*
- i comparisons
- j verbs to do with linking, for example, *connect, link*

- 1 The Bronze Age in China lasted more than a thousand years.
 - 2 Bronze was used more for weapons than for ritual objects.
 - 3 According to later Chinese histories, ancient rulers were only interested in the administrative side of leadership.
 - 4 Yu is said to have established the Xia dynasty.
 - 5 Ten sacred vessels were made by Yu.
 - 6 The sacred vessels were destroyed at the end of each dynasty.
 - 7 The Chinese Bronze Age was a simpler period than discoveries show.
 - 8 All of the legendary history of the Xia has been substantiated by archaeology.
 - 9 The Xia are connected with the Erlitou culture.
 - 10 The Erlitou culture had an impact on the Zhou.
- 2 Scan the text to locate the information in statements 1–10 and decide whether they are 'true', 'false' or 'not given'.

Understanding 'Yes/No/Not Given' statements

'Yes/No/Not Given' statements are used to check if statements agree with the claims or views of the writer in the reading passage – i.e. does the writer make a judgement about information in the reading passage?

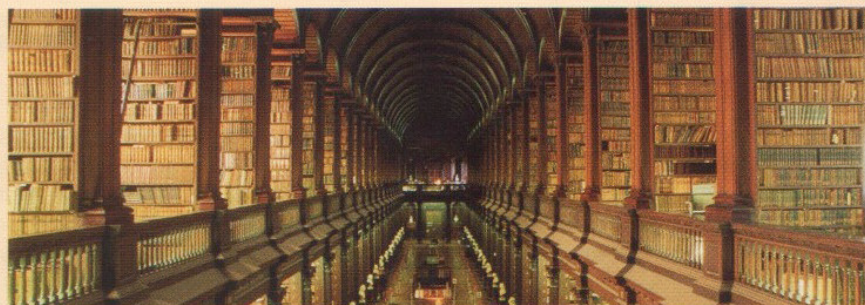
Checking claims is similar to checking information. Look at the 'True/False/Not Given' statements above. All of the statements can be classed as claims, but only statement 7 could be classed as an opinion or view. For example, statement 1 cannot be an opinion because it is either a statement of fact or a claim. The same applies to statement 2 and so on. You can put *It is a fact that* or *I claim that* in front of all these statements, but you cannot say *I believe that* before the statements, because it is not a matter of opinion. Can you say: *I believe that water boils at 100 degrees centigrade?* It is a claim until it is proven.

- 1 Work in pairs. Look at the extract and statements 1–9 below. The words underlined highlight the views expressed in the statements. These words can occur in statements checking the views of the writer. Decide what the function of the words underlined is in each sentence.

THROUGH THE LIBRARY DOORS

There are different ways to encourage people, both adults and children, to read. Some adults are clearly intimidated by the environment of libraries and bookshops in a way that children are not. Therefore, making libraries more appealing by creating an inviting environment that is modern and relaxing is likely to appeal to both young people and adults, even those who would not normally use a library. Offering facilities other than books such as a coffee shop, computers, DVD lending facilities and a wide range of magazines and newspapers will also entice people through the library doors. Once in, there is then a chance that some may look at books as people have a tendency to browse just as they might do in a supermarket or other shop. So maybe there is a place for teaching library managers marketing skills. This, however, may be a step too far for some people. Nevertheless, if the aim is to encourage people to read, then any solution is worth a try.

Starting young and using the young to attract the old is the long-term approach. Bookshops and libraries in the UK organize reading groups for young children, discussion groups, lectures and chess clubs, all of which are worthwhile activities for attracting readers. Reading groups for children have the added benefit of attracting adults who may not read themselves, but who may start browsing while they are waiting for their children.



Do the following statements agree with the views of the writer in the extract above?

Write:

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

- 1 It is easier for children to go into libraries than some adult members of the public.
- 2 The best way to attract people into libraries is by making them more welcoming.
- 3 Libraries should be allowed to sell books and magazines.
- 4 People tend to browse when they enter any large building.
- 5 Marketing skills could be taught to those who run libraries.
- 6 There is a chance that teaching marketing skills to managers will be unpopular.
- 7 Having reading clubs for children in libraries is an effective measure.
- 8 Discussion groups are of little use in encouraging people to visit libraries.
- 9 Reading clubs are better suited to book shops than libraries.

- 2 Answer questions 1–9.

READING PASSAGE

You should spend about 20 minutes on questions **1–13**, which are based on the reading passage on page 89.

Don't forget!

- Look at the title of the passage. Then skim the passage and the questions as they will help summarize the passage for you.
- Check what type of passage it is – is it about a problem, causes and solutions, etc.
- Look at the important words in the headings like *importance, contrast, role, methods, need, factors, how*, etc.
- Always look at the examples, if any are given.
- When you have finished, always check the sequence of the headings you have chosen to make sure that it makes sense.

Questions 1–6

The reading passage has eight paragraphs **A–H**.

Choose the correct headings for paragraphs **B** and **D–H** from the list of headings below.

List of Headings

- i** Organizations observing coastal change and their specific duties
- ii** The importance of geoscientists in coastal management
- iii** The link between research and funding
- iv** The complexity of making decisions about coastal defences
- v** Sites that are of special interest
- vi** A contrast between engineered and natural defence techniques
- vii** The role played by the Environment Agency in preventing flooding
- viii** The methods employed to check coastal change
- ix** The need for an integrated approach to coastal management
- x** Factors leading to coastal erosion
- xi** How management plans for the coastline operate

<i>Example</i>	<i>Answer</i>
Paragraph A	x

1 Paragraph **B**

<i>Example</i>	<i>Answer</i>
Paragraph C	iii

2 Paragraph **D**

3 Paragraph **E**

4 Paragraph **F**

5 Paragraph **G**

6 Paragraph **H**

The Impact of Coastal Erosion



- A** There is little doubt that rates of coastal change will escalate with enhanced rates of sea level rise and increasing storminess, both of which are associated with global warming. These changes are likely to have a significant impact on coastal populations and infrastructure. Sea levels are expected to rise significantly over the next century, largely as a result of the melting of ice sheets and thermal expansion of the oceans. Global warming will also change ocean currents, world weather patterns, winds, coastal currents, waves and storms. The increase in the frequency and size of the latter, which have an enormous influence on coastal change and near-shore sediment transport, will have a major impact on the form of UK coasts.
- B** Geological, archaeological and historical records are used to establish the nature of past coastal change. Monitoring of coastal change is also undertaken using a broad range of techniques including airborne laser ranging technology (LIDAR) and digital aerial photogrammetry. These techniques are used to determine coastal topography, coastal erosion, and shoreline position with high accuracy. The bathymetry of offshore areas is determined by several geophysical techniques including side-scan sonar or multi-beam surveys. In the UK geoscientists are widely involved in projects that address past coastal change and monitor how coasts are changing today. The principal aim of many of these studies is to understand the natural processes that govern coastal change in order to predict the patterns and rates of future coastal evolution.
- C** A broad range of decision-makers, including coastal zone planners, government and authorities require accurate and well-researched information in managing the coastal zone. Much of the impetus and funding for such research is derived from the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).
- D** Some agencies have particular responsibilities for monitoring particular aspects of coastal change. For instance, the Environment Agency has responsibilities for flooding in England and Wales. Three national agencies (English Nature, the Conservancy Council for Scotland and the Countryside Council for Wales) are responsible for preserving flora, fauna and geological features, including those along the coast. The best examples of wildlife habitats, geological features and landforms are designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI: there are about 6500 of these covering about 9% of the UK land area). Many surveys are carried out by the Ordnance Survey, the Hydrographic Office or the British Geological Survey. Other monitoring schemes are run by other government research institutes, universities and local government. Some funding for UK coastal projects is derived from the European Union.
- E** Much of this research on coastal change forms the basis for integrated coastal zone management on a local, national and international level. In the UK, Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs) are required for coastal management. Each of the SMPs is required to consider coastal change and issues such as sediment transport in the near-shore zone. Most

Ready for Reading

SMPs consider distinct parts of the coast, such as complete estuaries or sections of coast in which near-shore sediment is largely 'contained' within a coastal cell, or behaves in a consistent manner. SMPs broadly recommend, in scientific and technical terms, where: the process of erosion can be checked; the line can be held; 'managed retreat' of the coastline is the only option. Such evaluation is important given the high costs of coastal defences, which can only escalate in future years.

- F** Currently about 44% of the English and Welsh coast is protected by some form of coastal defence. Difficult decisions will need to be made to determine how this percentage will change in response to the increased rates of coastal erosion caused by sea-level rise. These decisions cannot be made without widespread consultation and will need to balance the socio-economic needs of developers, landowners and residents with coastal protection and environmental groups. Furthermore, they will need to take aspects of European legislation (e.g. the Habitats Directive) that have been incorporated into British law, into consideration.
- G** Coastal managers have to consider not only which parts of the coast they should attempt to defend, but also which type of defence is most appropriate.

Locally it will be best to defend coastal areas using traditional constructions, such as sea-walls, dykes, groynes and breakwaters. Such engineered 'hard' structures are expensive and may only result in enhanced coastal erosion on adjacent coasts. The alternative approach is to work with natural processes and create 'soft' engineered solutions, e.g. by encouraging accumulation of sediments in selected areas. For example, sediments accumulating in estuarine salt marshes protect the estuaries and associated human infrastructure from erosion, storm surges and coastal flooding.

- H** Whatever approach is used, no section of coast should be studied or managed in isolation. The whole picture must be understood, in regard to changes in the past, the present position and how any coastal management scheme will be affected by future changes. The best and most sustainable options probably lie in an integrated coastal zone management approach. These may contain multiple response strategies that can be modified for different socio-economic factors and environmental conditions, working with natural processes rather than against them. Geoscientists have a key role to play in providing the foundations for such management.

Don't forget!

- Read the stem and underline any words that you think will be paraphrased, for example, *accelerate* in question 7. This will help you locate the information in the text.
- Read each alternative as a complete sentence by combining it with the stem.
- Locate the information in the text.

Questions 7–9

Choose the correct letter **A**, **B**, **C** or **D**.

- 7** Coastal change will accelerate as
- A** coastal populations increase.
 - B** various events in the oceans occur.
 - C** sea levels gradually fall.
 - D** the oceans cool down.
- 8** Methods like LIDAR are employed to
- A** confirm the shape of the coastline of the past.
 - B** halt the spread of coastal erosion to neighbouring areas.
 - C** provide data on off-shore areas of the coastline.
 - D** establish the shape of the coastline with great precision.
- 9** Some national agencies have
- A** coastal and inland responsibilities for conservation.
 - B** only inland preservation responsibilities.
 - C** charge of designating SSSIs.
 - D** a duty to monitor coastal and inland flooding.

Don't forget!

- Check the instructions carefully. The summary can be of the whole passage or just part of the passage. The instructions for questions 10–13 tell you that the summary only covers paragraphs F–H.
- Always check the word limit.
- Always think about the types of words that are needed, for example, nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc.
- Do not write down any words on the answer sheet that are paraphrased in the summary.

Questions 10–13

Complete the summary of paragraphs **F–H** below.

Choose **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** from the passage for each answer.

It will not be easy to decide how much of the coastline will have some form of protection in years to come. Any decision will need to be taken after **10**, taking into account the needs of local people and agencies. **11** need to look at the parts of the coast which they ought to try and protect and the most suitable defence. Local answers will involve the use of **12**, such as breakwaters, but these 'hard' structures are not cheap and may only cause coastal erosion on nearby areas. Alternatively, methods like encouraging the build up of sediments in certain places may be the answer. In any case, no stretch of the coastline should be dealt with in **13**

Recognizing and understanding basic text relationships

Work in groups. Learning to recognize the type of texts that are contained in the reading passages can help you to find your way around the text more easily. In your groups, answer questions **1–10**.

- 1 Look at the heading of the passage on page 89. What does the word 'impact' tell you about the passage?
- 2 Is the word 'erosion' related to cause or effect?
- 3 In the headings you have chosen for paragraphs **A–H**, do any of them contain causes, effects or solutions?
- 4 Are these words for causes, effects and solutions, or synonyms?
- 5 Look at question **7**. Is the stem the cause or the effect?
- 6 Look at question **8**. Is the stem the cause or the effect?
- 7 In the summary (questions **10–13**), find a synonym for the word *solutions*.
- 8 Is the passage based on cause/effect and problem/solution or is it historical?
- 9 Is the passage on The Bronze Age: Xia Dynasty on page 85 based on cause/effect and problem/solution or is it historical?
- 10 What other text types do you know from your own reading?