Ready for Reading

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/section headings from a list**
- **classification**
- **completing sentences with the correct endings**
- **identification of information using 'True/False/Not Given' statements**
- **identification of the writers' claims and views using 'Yes/No/Not Given' statements**
- **labeling a diagram**
- **matching information to paragraphs/names to statements**
- **multiple-choice**
- **note/flowchart/**
- **table completion**
- **sentence completion**

You will have one hour to answer 40 questions, which is about 90 seconds for each question. This means that you will 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 the reading skills that you need to employ at different times to answer various types of questions.**
- **understanding the different question types**
- **understanding when to leave questions you cannot do initially, move on and come back later.**

Understanding True/False/Not Given statements

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

Example:
Questions 22 – 26
Do the following statements agree with the information given in Reading Passage 2?
In boxes 22 -26 on your answer sheet, write

TRUE	**if the statement agrees with the information**
FALSE	**if the statement contradicts the information**
NOT GIVEN	**if there is no information on this**

What does 'false' mean here?
What is the difference between 'false' and 'not given'?

1 Read the extract on the below and do the exercises, which follow.

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.

2 Work with your teacher. Use a-k to help you analyze the 'True/False/Not Given' statements in sentences 1-9 below. Underline the relevant words in each sentence.

a verbs to do with cause and effect, for example, lead to, bring about, result in/from
b restricting/excluding words, for example, only
c quantities, for example, all, majority/most/little/a 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, associate, but not cause and effect
k time relationships

Example:
The Bronze Age in China lasted more than a thousand years.
Comparison (more than) and length of time (a thousand years): i/k

1 Bronze was used more for weapons than for ritual objects.

2 According to the later Chinese histories, ancient rulers were only interested in the administrative side of leadership.

3 Yu is said to have established the Xia dynasty.

4 Ten sacred vessels were made by Yu.

5 The sacred vessels were destroyed by the end of each dynasty.

6 The Chinese Bronze Age was a simpler period than discoveries show.

7 All the legendary history of the Xia has been substantiated by archaeology.

8 The Xia are connected with the Erlitou culture.

9 The Erlitou culture had an impact on the Zhou.

3 Scan the text to locate the information in statements 1–9 and decide whether they are "True', "False' or "Not Given'.

1 NOT GIVEN. There is no comparison of weapons and ritual objects

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

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 judgment 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 with your teacher. Look at the extract and statements 1–7 below. The words in *italics* 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 in *italics* is in each sentence.**

Active cities

Many cities over the years have actively contributed to making their residents less physically active, as there is now less need for the public to walk anywhere. Yet, the health and economic benefits gained from financial investment in making cities active places for residents are clear for everyone to see.

Active cities can provide their residents with a range of opportunities that encourage people to have a more active lifestyle and improve their health. An active city is one that has, for example, open spaces and parks which can enhance the lives of workers or local people enormously by providing places for relaxation like walking, running or just sitting in the open air. Further, if open spaces such as the urban greenway* in London, are joined up, this then enables people to walk long distances through green trails, away from traffic and noise. It is, therefore, important for more open spaces to be created to benefit the general public health-wise, from which cities should then gain from more active and productive citizens.

Another key feature of an active city is good urban design. Such design makes the streets safe with good lighting and also inviting with street furniture like benches, micro-gardens and trees. As such simple changes clearly add to people's quality of life, they are a vital ingredient of active cities, and should be implemented everywhere.

* A cycleway and footpath in east London.

1 **People in cities now *tend* to be less active.**

2 ***The best way*** **to ensure the health benefits from active cities is through investment.**

3 **Open spaces in an active city are of *little* use to workers.**

4 **City dwellers *should* make more use of the open spaces.**

5 ***It is easier*** **for people in London than those in other cities to make use of open spaces.**

6 ***It is likely that*** **cities will benefit from having more open spaces.**

7 **Having good street design is an *effective* way to improve the quality of life of the public.**

2 Scan the text to locate the information in statements 1–7 and decide whether the answer is 'Yes' or 'No' or 'Not Given'.

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

2

3

4

5

6

7

Paragraph/Section headings

1 The title of the whole Reading Passage is *The Impact of Coastal Erosion*. Predict which of the following you expect to find in the passage:

cause ☐ **effect** ☐ **problem** ☐ **solution** ☐ **historical background** ☐

2 Match your answer in exercise 1 to words in the heading below.

Factors:

leading to:

coastal erosion:

Factors leading to 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.

3 Look at paragraph A above related to the heading. Underline the words that relate to factors. Then circle words that relate to coastal erosion.

factors:

coastal erosion:

4 Look at paragraph B and decide whether it is about:

1 the effects of coastal change
2 the methods employed to check coastal change.

Which verb(s) and noun helped you make your decision?

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.

5 Look at the list of headings below for the Reading Passage and circle the general nouns, e.g. *factors and methods*, in the headings.

List of Headings

i The complexity of making decisions about coastal defences
ii A contrast between engineered and natural defence techniques
iii The methods employed to check coastal change
iv The need for an integrated approach to coastal management
v Factors leading to coastal erosion

i

ii

iii

iv

v

6 **Underline** **the words that make the general nouns in the headings specific.**

i

ii

iii

iv

v

Summary completion

1 Work with your teacher. Look at paragraphs C–E. read the summary below and use the questions in the colored boxes to help you answer Questions 10-13.

C 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.

D 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.

E 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.

Question 10:
Is the answer a noun/noun phrase, etc ?
Is the answer connected with the word decision?
Is decision-making connected with discussing?
Does the latter part of the sentence give you a clue?

Question 11:
Is the answer a noun/noun phrase, etc?
Is there anything in the sentence that tells you the answer might be people or a body of people?
If so, which words?

Questions 10–13

*Complete the summary of paragraphs **C–E** below.*

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

Any decision on how much of the coastline will have some form of protection in years to come will not be easy. It will, however, 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** ..... , from sea-walls to breakwaters, but these 'hard' structures may only lead to the erosion in nearby coastal areas. Alternatively, methods such as 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** ..... .

Question 12:
Is the answer a noun/noun phrase, etc?
Do the examples after the blank space help you?
Are these examples physical things?
What words do you associate with making physical things?

Question 13:
Is the answer a noun/noun phrase, etc?
Different solutions need to be thought of together. Is this important?

Sentence completion

1 Work with your teacher. Look at the last paragraph E and make questions for examining the following sentence:

E 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 socioeconomic factors and environmental conditions, working with natural processes rather than against them. Geo-scientists have a key role to play in providing the foundations for such management.

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

As well as examining the past and the present, management of the coast needs to take into account ..... .

The basis of an integrated management strategy can be created by ..... .

2 Answer the question.

Notes: