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<http://thefreeschool.education/ielts.html>

Upper intermediate IELTS (Academic stream)

Subject code: IELTS1001
Teaching week 2: Academic reading : discussion 1
Commences Monday: 16 January 2017
Presenter: Dr. Jay Jericho

1. Welcome message

Welcome colleagues to teaching week 2, Academic reading: discussion 1.

2. Miscellaneous announcements relevant to this course.

None.

3. Discuss questions asked by the cohort

These were answered by private message inside the discussion forum by Jay.

I encourage people to post their questions and discussion on the public forum so that other participants can benefit from your content and the tutors' replies.

4. List open-access scholarly material for the current week

Please refer to the School's IELTS home page:

<http://www.thefreeschool.education/ielts.html>

“Reading test advice”

The British Council

<http://takeielts.britishcouncil.org/prepare-your-test/test-day-advice/reading-test-advice>

“IELTS Academic reading practice tests”

IDP Australia

<https://www.ieltsessentials.com/global/prepare/freepracticetests/academicreadingpractice-tests>

A small number of passages from Krishnan (2011) will be cited.

Krishnan, K. (2011), Careful versus expeditious reading: The case of the IELTS reading test, *Academic Research International*, 1(3), 25.

[http://www.savap.org.pk/journals/ARInt./Vol.1\(3\)/2011\(1.3-03\).pdf](http://www.savap.org.pk/journals/ARInt./Vol.1(3)/2011(1.3-03).pdf)

Reference resources:

Online Cambridge Dictionary

<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/>

Collins English Thesaurus

<https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english-thesaurus>

5. Summarise the previous teaching week

Last week's teaching notes offer a brief introduction to the IELTS exam. These notes briefly outline the history and purpose of the IELTS exam. This discussion overviews the content and structure of this exam. The IELTS's scoring system was also discussed with reference to IELTS's official scoring rubrics.

6. Introductory discussion to the topic

The Academic reading section of the IELTS exam is one of the four English language skills assessed by this examination along with writing, speaking and listening.

The reading assessment tests a passive skill. Reading and listening are regarded as passive skills as you interpret content that has been created by others. We examine reading in this course first, as reading is a skill that is independent of the other skills. It is possible to be an advanced reader even if your speaking, listening and writing skills are underdeveloped.

IELTS identify seven types of academic reading tasks:

1. Identifying information
2. Identifying a writer's views
3. Matching features
4. Matching headings
5. Multiple choice questions
6. Table completion
7. Diagram label completion

One example of each of these seven resources is available at this web-link:

<https://www.ieltsessentials.com/global/prepare/freepracticetests/academicreadingpracticetests>

We shall discuss these seven skills in further detail in section 8 of these notes.

7. YouTube presentations to support the introduction

“Five common mistakes to avoid in the IELTS reading test”

2 minutes and 16 seconds

IDP Australia

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M-8lv7-fhso&t=20s>

“IELTS expert tip: Introduction to the IELTS reading paper”

3 minutes and 7 seconds

Cambridge University

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y5p2QttUI-k>

“Need some tips for the IELTS reading test?”

2 minutes and 5 seconds

The British Council

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7qywHKeXwfE>

8. Topic discussion - further detail

This section offers a discussion of the seven different reading skills that may be tested in the IELTS examination.

Next week, we shall look at several official IELTS reading exam passages and multiple choice questions and practice the skills required to answer multiple choice questions.

Discussion this week looks at these skills in a general sense. Furthermore, we explore a small number of examples from official IELTS academic reading assessment questions.

For illustration purposes, it is useful to take a look at one official IELTS Academic reading question before we discuss individual examples of the skills that this test assesses. IELTS uses a variety of assessment formats in this section. This most popular assessment uses the multiple choice format to examine a candidate's responses to a reading passage. You must select the correct answer from four options: A, B, C and D.

An example of an IELTS Academic reading passage is found at:

"Reading practice test 1 - IELTS Academic"

<http://takeielts.britishcouncil.org/prepare-test/practice-tests/reading-practice-test-1-academic>

Question 8 on page 5 from this passage asks the reader:

"What did researchers identify as the ideal time to wake up in the morning?"

- A 6.04
- B 7.00
- C 7.22
- D 7.30"

1. Identifying information

This skill requires you to correctly interpret details from text. For example, consider this passage:

Statement:

“Most colleges require a lecturer to hold a Master Degree, although they prefer lecturers to hold a Doctorate.”

Argument:

The sentence above is consistent with these statements:

- Most colleges will employ a lecturer who holds a Master Degree;
- Most colleges will employ a lecturer who holds a Doctoral Degree;
- Most colleges will employ a lecturer who holds a Master and a Doctoral Degree;
- Most colleges will not employ a lecturer who does not hold a degree.

You need to be comfortable reading an original passage of text and matching it with statements that are true, false or cannot be determined from the information provided.

Do you agree with Jay that the four bullet point items listed above are consistent with the original statement that “Most colleges require a lecturer to hold a Master Degree, although they prefer lecturer’s to hold a Doctorate.”

The tutors in this course encourage you to think critically at all times during this course.

2. Identifying writer's views

You need to be able to read a passage of text and confirm a writer’s opinion on a topic.

There are two main types of opinions:

- i. Agree, disagree or undecided.

Example: Anne *agrees* with her Government that the current national unemployment rate of 7% is too high - it should ideally be lower than 5%.

ii. Like, dislike, neutral

Example: Michael *dislikes* classical music. He only enjoys folk music.

3. Matching features

You may need to be able to show your examiner that you understand positive and negative associations between textual discussion contained inside the reading passage and the questions asked in the assessment.

Consider this example.

Discussion:

Libya is a dry, arid country. Most of the nation is comprised of desert. This terrain is normal in nations located on the Mediterranean sea on the African continent.

The following positive association is correct with reference to the statement above:

i. Libya is a country that has large amount of sand.

Note the association between the words 'desert' and 'sand'.

The following association is not correct with reference to the statement above:

ii. The vast bulk of Libya's terrain is comprised of ice cap.

The following statement cannot be determined from the passage above:

- lii. Five percent of Libya's terrain is comprised of dense forests.

4. Matching headings

A matching headings exercise may require you to identify the dominant theme that describes a defined passage of text such as a paragraph.

You may refer to this example:

https://www.ielts.org/~media/pdfs/115016_academic_reading_sample_task_-_matching_headings__2_.ashx

For those who cannot access Acrobat PDF files, you may read an extract from a matching headings questions (*i.e.* the link above) in the text below:

“Questions 1 – 5

Sample Passage 6 has six sections, A-F.

Choose the correct heading for sections A-D and F from the list of headings below.

Write the correct number i-ix in boxes 1-5 on your answer sheet.

List of Headings

- I. The probable effects of the new international trade agreement
- li. The environmental impact of modern farming
- iii. Farming and soil erosion
- iv. The effects of government policy in rich countries
- v. Governments and management of the environment
- vi. The effects of government policy in poor countries
- vii, Farming and food output
- viii, The effects of government policy on food output
- ix. The new prospects for world trade

5. Multiple choice questions

Multiple choice questions require you to select the correct answer among four options.

Consider this example:

What is the capital of Greece?

- a) Sydney
- b) Rome
- c) Tokyo
- d) None of the above

The answer to this question is “d”.

Sometimes the answer might not be specific or exact. You may need to select the best answer from the options.

Consider this example:

What is the location of mainland China?

- a) It is located on tip of the South American continent
- b) It is located between South Africa and Mozambique
- c) It is located on planet Earth
- d) It is located at 43.6532° N, 79.3832° W

Note that the correct answer is “C”. This is interesting, as this correct answer is the least specific answer among the four options.

6. Table completion

Sometimes you need to complete a table after reading an academic passage of text.

Consider this example:

Sovereign nation	Capital City
Australia	Canberra
South Korea	?
?	Cairo
Mexico	?
?	Ottawa

The first answer has been completed for illustration purposes.

7. Diagram label completion

This exercise requires you to complete labels on a diagram based on your interpretation of an academic reading passage. You may view an example at:

<https://www.ielts.org/~media/pdfs/academic-reading-sample-task-diagram-label-completion.ashx>

9. **Instructions for how to proceed after reading the instructor's notes**

Please watch the YouTube presentations listed above. If these do not appeal to you, then you may ignore the presentation.

Please also read the course materials listed in the other sections above. The readings in section 4 offer technical advice about how to approach academic reading assessment questions.

The online dictionary and thesaurus may aid you to interpret words that you do not know. This exercise will aid you to develop your vocabulary prior to taking the IELTS exam. You cannot use a dictionary or thesaurus when you take the IELTS exam.

10. **Discussion questions set by the tutor**

This exercise is optional. Read this article by Krishnan (2011).

Krishnan, K. (2011), Careful versus expeditious reading: The case of the IELTS reading test, *Academic Research International*, 1(3), 25.

[http://www.savap.org.pk/journals/ARInt./Vol.1\(3\)/2011\(1.3-03\).pdf](http://www.savap.org.pk/journals/ARInt./Vol.1(3)/2011(1.3-03).pdf)

The format of this article does not match the academic reading passages in the IELTS exam. The difficulty level of this reading equates to the level of the IELTS academic reading. Furthermore, the IELTS reading passage covers a wide variety of disciplines such as environmental science, music and literature.

You may benefit from reading the Abstract and Conclusion section of this article.

Read the Abstract and Conclusion section once and read each sentence once only. How much of the Abstract and Conclusion section were you able to understand? What parts did you find difficult? List any words that you could not understand on the discussion forum.

11. Discussion and questions put forward by participants.

I look forward to reading your contributions on the discussion board at:

<http://chat.thefreeschool.education/forum131.html> .

Jay and Conny