

**IELTS General Training Module
How To Maximize Your Score**

Ace the IELTS

Third Edition



By Simone Braverman

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IELTS General Module – How to Maximize Your Score (Third Edition)

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From the author

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Flexible Working in our Workplace - <http://www.acas.org/>

A Threatened Breed (Polar Bears) - <http://www.wwf.org.uk/>

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Tips for the Reading Test

Test structure

General Training reading in most cases consists of several smaller passages that are taken from advertisements, official documents, booklets, manuals and 2 or 3 larger texts taken from books, magazines or newspapers.

As in the Listening test, questions in the Reading test are arranged in groups. Instructions will tell you which group of questions belongs to which paragraph or portion of text. You may see the questions before or after the passage they belong to.

Manage your own time

As I said before, time is your greatest enemy. In the Listening test it was managed for you, but the Reading test is a different story. You need to manage it very carefully yourself.

When you receive the Reading booklet, first of all count how many passages there are. Let's say there are 4 passages in the booklet. You could divide the hour into 4 equal parts and spend 15 minutes on each passage, but this is not the smartest way. The **smartest** way is to spend 10 minutes on the first passage, 15 minutes on the second, 15 on the third, and 20 on the last one. Why? Because they progress in level of difficulty!

Write down the time when you should start and when you should finish working on each passage and stick to it. In each passage set aside 2 minutes to copy your answers to the Answer Sheet. For example, in the first paragraph you should use 8 minutes to actually answer the questions (writing the answers on the booklet pages) and 2 to copy your answers to the Answer Sheet.

If you didn't finish a passage in time, move to the next one anyway. And whatever you do, please do not forget about the Answer Sheet (remember the guy with the ZERO score?)

If you have some time left by the end of the Reading test, make sure that you didn't forget to answer any question. Check and double check your answers. It can give you a few "easy" points if you find mistakes before the examiner does.

Don't read – scan!

It sounds absurd that you don't need to read in a Reading test, right? Anyway, it's true. The biggest mistake you could make is to start the test by reading the whole passage.

The best thing is to scan quickly through the text. Don't try to understand every word! Just go over it and get the idea of what each paragraph is about. Usually you don't need to read the whole paragraph – a couple of first sentences are enough.

b) What you are unhappy about.

“I was very surprised to see the newest model with a 2-year warranty breaking so soon and for no reason at all.”

c) What you did to resolve the situation.

“I contacted your store immediately in order to return the laptop and spoke to the store manager. He refused to replace the laptop and suggested that it should be repaired.”

d) How you feel about the problem.

“You can imagine how receiving this offer upset me.”

This paragraph should be the longest in the whole letter. You can even divide it into several parts.

3. Write what you would like them to do, and what you will do if they don't give you what you want.

“I insist that you replace the damaged laptop and send me a new one. Otherwise I will be forced to stop my payments to your store.”

4. Write a formal ending for the letter, your name and sign.

“I look forward to hearing from you.”

If you **know** the name of the person you are writing to, sign

“Yours **sincerely**,
Mr. Smith”

If you **don't know** the name of the person you are writing to, sign

“Yours **faithfully**,
Mr. Smith”

40 minutes? Not enough!

Hardly anyone can get their first essays done on time. So don't be disappointed if it takes you an hour or even longer. First try to get used to the Baby Steps process that I explained earlier. After a little bit of practice, you will start writing essays faster and faster, and finally you will reach your goal - an essay in 40 minutes. You should work with a clock all the time - this is the only way for you to monitor your progress.

Helpful phrases

Usually people who don't read and write in English every day have trouble expressing themselves in an essay. So I enclose here a list of phrases to help you write more elegant sentences.

Phrases to show two sides of an argument

- “Some people prefer Those who disagree point out that...”
- “We must acknowledge ... Nevertheless, ...”
- “No one can deny ... However, ...”
- “Many people hold the opinion... Others, however, disagree...”
- “Although it is hard to compete with ..., some people still prefer ...”

Phrases for adding a linked point

- “Not only..., but...”
- “Also”
- “Furthermore,”
- “In addition,”
- “Moreover,”

Phrases to contrast with what was written before

- “Although...”
- “However,”
- “Nevertheless,”
- “Even if...”
- “In spite of”
- “On the other hand”

Have an opinion!

Now that you have got the idea, how do you prepare for this kind of test?

Well, you need to have an opinion on a wide range of different topics.

I include here a list of some of the most common topics for you to think about.

Just go over them, think of what you have to say on those issues and think of which words you will use. Then record yourself saying a couple of sentences on each of the topics and listen to what comes out. Think of what you could have done better. This should get you ready for the Discussion part.

You can view the latest topics from real IELTS exams in the website below:

<http://www.ielts-blog.com/category/recent-ielts-exams/>

And this is a summary of topics for you to think about:

General topics

- o The main industry in your country now, how it will develop in the future.
- o Effects of pollution on ecology.
- o Popular forms of transport in your country.
- o How to improve public transport.
- o How your country has been improved.
- o The city you are living in, its advantages and disadvantages.
- o Your country's weather, main seasons.
- o Your country's animals, in what ways they are used.
- o A piece of equipment that you consider very important, why, how you started to use it.
- o Computers - their advantages and disadvantages, whether people of different sexes and ages use them more or less.
- o Food in restaurants, why and when we eat there, what are the pros and cons of eating in a restaurant.
- o Celebrities in your country.
- o Idols - who chooses them, who copies them, etc.
- o A favorite holiday in your country

Household

- o Who does the shopping?
- o Where do you like to shop and when?
- o What do you shop for?
- o Who does the housework, which work is the most important, why?

Company Benefits

Welcome to your new job with us and we hope you have a happy and long career. To help you enjoy life more and create a good work life balance, we provide various benefits for you.

Cafeteria

The staff cafeteria provides heavily subsidised meals for breakfast or lunch. The cafeteria opens weekdays from 6.30 a.m. and closes at 3 p.m. Reservations are never necessary. Because of the prices, the cafeteria is always a vibrant place to go, eat and socialise before work and in the middle of the working day.

Sport

We have our own gym in the annex next to our main building. If you'd like to use the gym, you need to undergo an induction session. Every other Monday, we have a fitness instructor who will come to our gym and give inductions to any staff who want to use the gym. Please do not use the gym without the induction. We also have a company membership at the town golf club. Our staff have playing and social membership access to the Club, but they do not have any voting rights in terms of how the Club is run and organised.

Watching Football

The company sponsors our local football club. This is a great method of expanding recognition of our company within the town and it can also help to influence customer brand loyalty. As a result of our sponsorship, we have a hospitality box at all home games and employees can take advantage of this for themselves and their families. There are 20 places available every week. If you want to book some places (limited to 3 per employee), please contact Andrew Hudson (ext. 734). If there are places available on the morning of the game, you can get more than 4 places.

Social Trips

The company runs periodical trips at weekends for staff. This might be to local places of interest, such as a castle or stately home, performances, such as theatre and classical or popular music, and museums, such as London's Tate Britain. We usually lay on a coach for transport and pay for the entry of the event. All trips will be advertised well in advance and places will be allocated on a 'first come, first served basis'. The trips are only for employees, but if there are places still available four days before the event, people may reserve places for friends and family. If the coach is not at least half booked by staff members four days before the event, the trip will be cancelled.

Childcare

We know that employees with children often have problems with organising quality childcare at affordable prices. Employees can take advantage of our special childcare vouchers that are redeemable at five childcare centres in town. All these centres have been screened and approved by our company management.

We have been in contact with the Inland Revenue Service and none of our staff benefits affects employees' annual tax liability.

Questions 36 – 39

Do the following statements agree with the information given in the text?

In boxes 36 - 39 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

- 36 Polar bears' feeding habits are fairly uniform throughout the year.
- 37 Towns affected by polar bear visits have set up their own patrols to help keep the bears away.
- 38 Zoos around the world are accelerating breeding programs to help build up polar bear numbers.
- 39 People around the world can take part in the monitoring of polar bear movements.

Question 40

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

Write the correct letter in box 40 on your answer sheet.

- 40 What is the best title for the text in Section 3?
- A The King of the Arctic
- B The Disappearing Land
- C A Threatened Breed
- D Climate Change in the North