

### Survey the text

Look at: the title  
section headings and special print  
illustrations, graphs and tables.

Build up an idea of what the text as a whole is about.

Then look at each paragraph. There is often one sentence which will summarise what the paragraph is about. This sentence is often the first or last sentence in the paragraph.

Do not take more than 2 minutes.

### Exercise 1

Survey the following passage and answer the questions which follow:

Time: 2 minutes

#### Hidden history; the beetle's secret cycle of life

The deathwatch beetle is thought of as the devil's pest in churches and old houses, but in natural habitats it infests a wide range of decaying hardwoods. It has been found in hornbeam, sweet chestnut, hawthorn, beech, ash, black poplar, elm, larch, spruce and yew, but the two most commonly infested species in Britain are oak and willow. In buildings, oak timbers are usually the focus of attack by the beetle, but alder, walnut, elm, larch and Scots pine can be affected too. Deathwatch beetles attack wood that has been decayed by fungi, so it is the damp-prone parts of timbers, at the ends and near leaking gutters and enclosed spaces, that are normally attacked first.

Adult beetles emerge from holes in the timber in spring, or occasionally in autumn. They breed once and a week or two later the females lay eggs, usually about fifty, in small cracks on the surface of the wood. Adults depend on stored reserves; they do not feed, so the adult lifespan is largely determined by body size and metabolic demands. Emergent females rarely live for more than ten weeks, and males eight or nine weeks, at a temperature of about 20° C.

The eggs hatch after two to five weeks and the larvae then wander across the wood to find suitable entry points through which to bore into the timber. Then they take between two and ten years to complete their development. The larvae pupate in late

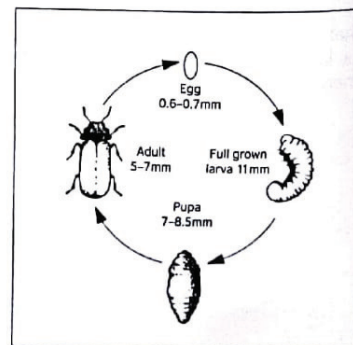


Figure 1

summer to early autumn, each individual having constructed a pupal cell just below the surface of the wood. After two or three weeks, the immature beetle emerges from the pupal skin, but then remains torpid inside the chamber until the following spring or early summer. The mature beetle then cuts a perfectly round hole, three to five millimetres in diameter, and emerges covered in a fine layer of wood powder.

#### Questions 1-4

- 1 What is the subject of the passage as a whole?
  - 2 Which paragraph contains information about the larvae?
  - 3 Which paragraph contains information about the adult beetles?
  - 4 Which paragraph contains information about where the beetles live?
- Now look at the answer key and go on to the discussion section below.

#### Discussion

Notice how with only the title and the illustration you have most of the information in the passage. There may be many words you do not know in this passage but the title told you the topic was the life cycle of something. Figure 1 shows you what it is and gives you much of the key information.

Looking at the first sentence of each paragraph gives you enough information to answer questions 2-4 above.

You did not need to read every word and you did not need to know every word. This exercise practised surveying the text – which is something you should do with every text no matter what the questions are. This is a major reading skill. Some IELTS questions ask you to find the main ideas in a text. For this you go through the process of looking at the title, etc., as you do when you survey the text. You have to recognise that this is what the question requires. In general you cannot answer a question properly unless you know what sort of answer is needed and how to find it. This takes us to the next main process you go through after surveying the text:

#### Analyse the questions

Ask yourself 'What is the purpose of this question? If you can recognise that the question is asking about the general theme of the passage, then you already know how to find the answer quickly. If the question is asking for specific information, make sure you are clear what that information is (is it a number? a period of time? an activity? etc.).

Analysing the question has another meaning too. It means read it carefully to see what form your answer should be in (one word? three words? a number?).

Exercise 1 consists of the simplest kind of question type: open questions. You must answer in a specified number of words – usually no more than three. Often, however, only one or two are needed. Questions 2-4 can all have one-word answers, or simply a number.

Now you have surveyed the text you are better prepared to look for more detailed information. Go on to the next exercise.

Answer the following questions on the passage *Hidden history: the beetle's secret cycle of life*.

Time: 5 minutes

### Questions 5–10

Complete the summary below by choosing a maximum of three words from the passage to fill the spaces 5–10. Write your answers on the answer sheet.

#### Summary

The deathwatch beetle is found most often in ... 5 ... and ... 6 ... They infest damp-prone timber which has been affected ... 7 ... Adults do not feed, so they survive on ... 8 ... and live for only two or three months. The larvae, on the other hand, live for up to ... 9 ... feeding on the timbers during that time. They pupate in ... 10 ... but the adult does not emerge until the following spring.

Now look at the answer key and go on to the discussion section below.

#### Discussion

Most of the questions in the reading test ask you to **find specific information**. The best way to prepare yourself for this is by going through the first two processes properly:

- survey the text
- analyse the question.

For example, because you have surveyed the text you should know exactly which paragraphs to look at for the answers to each question. This saves a lot of time. Also from analysing the questions you can often see what sort of information to look for. It is clear, for example, that the answer to question 9 must be a period of time.

So the first two processes are very important: you survey the text and you analyse the questions. Then:

#### Go back to the text to find the answers to the questions

Do not read every word and do not worry if you do not understand everything. Remember you are reading for a purpose. Be clear about what information you need to find and just look for that information. You will need to do this quickly.

Exercise 2 is an example of a typical **gap-filling exercise**. There are several important points to note:

- the passage in the exercise is a summary of the reading passage, so you will find many changes from the original
- even if you find specialised words in the reading passage (e.g. 'pupate') you will be able to answer the questions (e.g. question 10); as stated in the introduction, IELTS is a test of your understanding and use of English, not your specialised knowledge
- the question states that you must use a maximum of three words – therefore you have to reduce the text to answer question 10. You should keep only the important words
- the question states the words must come from the passage – you cannot use your own words.

The last two points show how important it is to **read the instructions carefully and to check that you have done so**. This brings us to the final process in doing the reading test:

#### Check your answers

Allow a short period of time for checking.

Look at any answers you are not sure of.

Read all the instructions again and make sure you have followed them exactly.

These are all the major skills you need to know and the things you need to do for the reading test. In the following exercises you will practise these skills and processes on other reading passages, and you will also meet some other types of question.

### Exercise 3

Read the passage below and answer questions 11–15 which follow.

Time: 5 minutes

#### How the brain reorganises itself

##### Paragraph 1

The work that Tim Pons and his colleagues published last week is basic research into the portion of the brain, the cortex, that one scientist says is 'responsible for all the interesting things we do'. The cortex is a layer between two and five millimetres thick that covers the brain and each area of the cortex has a different function. The area Pons and his colleagues are interested in receives 'somatic' sensation, in other words, information about touch, position, heat, cold and pain. The somatic sensory cortex can be represented as a topographic map, sub-divided into specific regions that receive nerve signals from specific areas of the body.

##### Paragraph 2

About twelve years before Pons and his colleagues carried out their experiments, the Macaque monkeys being studied had the nerves cut which carried signals from the fingers, palm, upper limb, neck and the back of the head. The regions bordering this part of the somatic sensory cortex receive signals from the face and trunk.<sup>1</sup>

##### Paragraph 3

Under anaesthetic, Pons and his colleagues inserted electrodes into the region of the cortex where the nerves had been cut and recorded the neuronal<sup>2</sup> response. They found to their surprise that the whole region, covering an area of between ten and fourteen square millimetres, now responded to stimulation of the lower face. Previously, scientists had thought that the cortex of adult animals could not reorganise itself over an area greater than one or two millimetres.

<sup>1</sup> trunk = the main part of the body  
<sup>2</sup> neuronal = areas of the nerves

### Questions 11–13

Match one of the headings from the box to each of the paragraphs in the reading passage. Write the corresponding letter (A–F) in spaces 11–13 on your answer sheet. Note that there are more headings than paragraphs so you will not use all of them.

#### Headings

- |                          |                        |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| A Macaque monkeys        | B Method of research   |
| C Electrical stimulation | D The effects of heat  |
| E Cortex reorganisation  | F The area of research |

- 11 Paragraph 1 .....
- 12 Paragraph 2 .....
- 13 Paragraph 3 .....

### Questions 14–15

14 According to the passage, which four of the senses listed below are 'somatic' sensations?

- |         |            |               |
|---------|------------|---------------|
| A taste | B touch    | C temperature |
| D pain  | E position | F emotion     |
| G smell | H sound    | I vision      |

Write the four appropriate letters (from A–I) on your answer sheet.

15 Which part of the brain receives signals from different parts of the body?

Write **no more than three words** from the passage.

Now look at the answer key and go on to the discussion section below.

#### Discussion

Did you:

- survey the text
- analyse the questions to see exactly what they are asking for
- read the instructions carefully
- notice which questions were about general themes and which were asking for specific information
- know where to look for specific information and what sort of information was required
- go back to the text looking quickly for the information you need
- remember not to try and read every word

- move on to the next question if you could not answer one
- leave enough time to check your answers and to check that you followed the instructions exactly.

Use this checklist for the next exercise you do.

Questions 11–13 are typical of the **matching exercises** you find in IELTS. In this case you must identify the main theme of each paragraph or section. So these questions were about the **general themes** of the passage. It is not enough if a subject is mentioned; it has to be the dominant theme or idea. Paragraph 1 mentions heat, for example, but it is not about heat. Paragraph 2 talks about an experiment on Macaque monkeys but it is not about Macaque monkeys in general. The main point of paragraph 3 comes in the last rather than the first sentence.

Question 14 is a type of **multiple-choice** question: you have to choose the correct answers from a list. It is also a question where you must find **specific information** in the relevant paragraph. Notice that the actual text will not necessarily use exactly the same words as the question ('temperature' is not a word in that paragraph). It is the information you have to look for, not the words.

Question 15 seems very simple. But the important thing is to read the question very carefully; you must not use more than **three words**, and they must be **from the passage**.

Once again, do not worry about specialised vocabulary or knowledge: you may find a glossary of definitions of specialised vocabulary ('trunk', 'neuronal'); you can answer question 15 correctly without any previous knowledge of areas of the brain or their function.

#### Exercise 4

This reading passage contains some very long, complex sentences (more complex, in fact, than you are likely to find in the IELTS test). Don't panic. Use your checklist. Concentrate on identifying the key phrases and ideas.

Answer the questions below by reading the passage.

Time: 10 minutes

#### Social and cultural impacts of tourism in Cyprus

*In Cyprus, hospitality forms an integral part of the culture, and the people have a welcoming attitude towards foreigners. Furthermore, the society's culture emphasises ideologies and value systems which attach great importance to individual achievement. As the tourist policy followed by the Cyprus Government and the Cyprus Tourism Organization has been to aim at the middle and high income groups, and the tourists come mainly from Europe, tourism has not had as marked an adverse effect on the values and attitudes of Cypriot society as may otherwise have been the case. In certain areas, such as Ayia Napa, however, the influx of large numbers of tourists has influenced social behaviour and social values, and caused a certain amount of antagonism. Bryden suggests that:*

*there may be a relationship between tourism density, expressed in the annual numbers of tourists as a proportion of the population ... and the growth of resentment towards tourists. ... The inference here is that tourism density is an indicator of the degree of confrontation between tourists and indigenous population and that this confrontation gives rise to the resentment of tourists.*

**Table 1 Contact ratio values, 1985**

Area	Contact ratio	
	Annual average	Peak day value
Limassol	19.5	7.3
Larnaca	24.4	13.9
Ayia Napa/Paralimni	3.0	1.5
Paphos	17.7	10.8
Hill resorts	43.0	16.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>18.0</b>	<b>9.5</b>

The concept of 'tourism density' is thus used as a measure of 'social carrying capacity' which Mathieson and Wall define as 'host peoples' levels of tolerance for the presence and behaviour of tourists'. An alternative measure used by Andronikou is the 'contact ratio', which is the inverse of tourism density, that is the ratio of the local population to tourist population. Now, whereas Andronikou suggests that the minimum value that the contact ratio can fall to before the social impact resulting from tourist development becomes detrimental is about eight, most authors now do not believe that a single specific value can be given for social carrying capacity. Mathieson and Wall point out that:

*Carrying capacity remains an elusive concept, but the time when researchers and managers sought one mythical magic number, which could be approached with safety but exceeded at peril, has passed.*

Nevertheless, inspection of table 1 does suggest that it is highly likely that the social carrying capacity in Ayia Napa has been overreached. The extreme concentration of tourists here has resulted in a modification of social attitudes among young people, especially towards sexual behaviour. This is part of the 'demonstration effect' which introduces foreign ideologies and ways of life into societies that have not been exposed to tourist lifestyles. The close and continued contact of Cypriot youth with young foreign tourists has resulted in them adopting different sets of values on morality, style of dressing, and so on, in comparison with prevailing traditional attitudes, and as a result the bonds of closely knit families are in some cases being loosened.

**Questions 16–18**

Read the following statements and say how they reflect the information in the reading passage, by writing:

- T if it is true according to the passage
- F if it is false according to the passage
- NG if the information is not given in the passage.

Write your answers in boxes 16–18 on your answer sheet.

<i>Example</i>	<i>Answer</i>
Cypriots are welcoming	T

- 16 Individual achievement is more important than hospitality.
- 17 Tourists come mainly from the UK.
- 18 Cypriot society has not been adversely affected by tourism.

**Questions 19–21**

In the two lists below, a definition in the list on the right (A–G) matches one item in the list on the left (19–21). Show which items match by writing one appropriate letter (A–G) in boxes 19–21 on your answer sheet.

<i>Example</i>	<i>Answer</i>
'tourism density'	D
19 'social carrying capacity'	A ratio of locals to tourists
20 'contact ratio'	B introduction of foreign values to tourists
21 the 'demonstration effect'	C host's tolerance towards tourists
	D proportion of tourists to locals
	E approximately eight
	F introduction of new lifestyles into societies
	G different sets of values

**Discussion**

Questions 16–18 are typical of the true/false type of questions that you may find in IELTS. Make sure you read carefully enough to answer the question accurately and make sure you answer according to the information in the passage. Both 'individual achievement' and 'hospitality' are mentioned in the opening paragraph; it does not state which is more important. You may know that most tourists in Cyprus come from the UK; the passage states 'Europe' only. For question 18, the passage states 'tourism has not had as marked an adverse effect ...'. You may not know the meaning of 'as marked ...'; the writer goes on to say, however, '... has influenced social ... and caused ... antagonism'.

Questions 19–21 are another type of matching exercise. In this case, you must match terms used in the text with possible definitions of those terms as used in the text. Find 'social carrying capacity' in the text and the definition follows: 'host peoples' levels of tolerance for the presence and behaviour of tourists'.

Having found the definition of 'demonstration effect', you are wasting precious time if you try to understand the very long final sentence; you do not need to read it carefully.

**Exercise 5**

Sometimes the questions come before the reading passage. It makes **no difference** to the things you should do. Continue what you have been practising:

- survey the text
- then analyse the questions
- then return to the text.

In the next exercise some questions come before the passage and some come after it.

Answer the questions below by reading the passage *Hi-tech connections*.

Time: 7 minutes

### Questions 22–23

Write the appropriate letters A–D in boxes 22 and 23 on your answer sheet.

22 Paragraph A is an introduction to ...

- A management vocabulary
- C high-technology communications

- B computers
- D world markets

23 The purpose of paragraph C is to ...

- A describe telephone networks
- C give a further example

- B illustrate with an example
- D introduce a new idea

### Question 24

Complete the sentence below using a maximum of four words.

24 Rapid developments in advanced communications have resulted from ...

### Hi-tech connections

#### Paragraph A

Over the past fifteen years, information technology (IT) has become an essential part of the managerial vocabulary for a great many businesses. Today, however, telecommunications is rapidly becoming as important as the computer industry. This can be attributed to the liberalisation of world markets, which has created an explosion in the development and availability of advanced communications services.

#### Paragraph B

In many instances, communications systems are being used to enable companies to implement new strategies. One such strategy is the move towards more globalised business. Obviously, setting up an office overseas is not simply a matter of identifying potential markets. Logistics, such as establishing links for the vital flows of information between a company's head office and its overseas subsidiaries and suppliers, are equally important. Not surprisingly, sophisticated communications systems play a fundamental role in connecting business operations.

#### Paragraph C

One such system is the Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN), which enables companies to send and receive high speed data, fax transmissions and ordinary voice calls, as well as images for video-conferences, over international digital telephone networks. The network also enables businesses to offer their services on a worldwide scale. One such offering is the new International Dealerlink. This is a voice-only, private circuit service jointly offered by BT and France Telecom. It can meet the special communications needs of the finance community by providing a fast and cost-effective link between the two financial centres. The service also opened between the UK and The Netherlands at the end of January.

### Questions 25–26

Using the information in the passage, answer the questions below using figures or a maximum of three words. Write your answers on your answer sheet.

25 What does 'such' refer to in the first sentence of paragraph C?

26 How many countries have access to the International Dealerlink?

Now look at the answer key and go on to the discussion section below.

### Discussion

If you analysed the questions properly you will have seen that questions 22–24 focus on the **general themes** of the passage and paragraphs in it. Questions 22 and 23 deal with the topic and purpose of paragraphs. Question 24 took you further into the relationships within a paragraph. Questions 25 and 26 are both open questions requiring you to find **specific information**. Question 25 refers to relationships between paragraphs. For question 26 all you need to do is write down a number.

Questions 22–24 are examples of **sentence completion** questions: you have to complete sentences which are started for you. Pay special attention to the instructions. Questions 22 and 23 are both multiple-choice types of sentence completion: you are asked to choose the right phrase and put the corresponding **letter** on your answer sheet (you do not write out the phrase). Question 24 asks you to write the **phrase** which completes the sentence (you do not write the whole sentence); in fact the instructions state 'a maximum of four words' and writing the whole sentence would be marked as wrong.

### Exercise 6

Sometimes graphs, charts, diagrams or tables will accompany the reading passage. Like figure 1 in the first exercise and table 1 in exercise 4, these can give you important helpful information about the text. The next reading passage provides another example.

Read the passage below and answer the questions.

Time: 12 minutes

### Perchance to dream

In 1952 the neurophysiologist Nathaniel Kleitman and one of his students, Eugene Aserinsky, studied the rolling movements of the eyes which occur early in sleep. They attached electrodes which responded to eye movements to the temples of volunteers who came to sleep in their laboratory. As the volunteers began to fall asleep, the electrodes detected the slow rolling eye movements which could be seen easily through their eyelids. Soon after, the volunteers fell deeper into sleep and their eyes became still. An hour or so later, to the great surprise of Aserinsky, the pen recorders showed that the eyes were moving again. This time they were not just swinging from side to side but were darting back and forth (see figure 2). These rapid eye movements continued for some time and then the eyes came to rest again.

These phases of rapid eye movement (R.E.M.) occur every ninety minutes or so and represent a distinct and important stage of sleep. The huge slow waves of normal sleep are replaced by a higher frequency pattern closer to the brainwaves of the normal waking state. In this state of 'paradoxical sleep', it is more difficult to wake the sleeper even though the brain is active. Indeed, most of the muscles of the body are paralysed, cut off from the restless activity of the brain by inhibitory signals from a tiny region deep in the brainstem. The only responses to the brain activity are the eye movements and the occasional twitching of fingers or the grinding of teeth.

Reading