

CRACK IELTS IN A FLASH (GENERAL READING)

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In the Name of God

Dedicated to all who seek knowledge,
perfection, and betterment to serve mankind
more and better

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Introduction

This book tries to improve your reading skill to help you achieve a higher band score. First, it offers you some general remarks as how to improve the reading skill. Next, it provides you with the most essential strategies needed to tackle different types of questions. It improves your reading skill through some short sample reading exercises and then it provides you with a number of sample tests to make you more and more acquainted with IELTS domain vocabulary, text type, question type, format and strategies.

It is advisable to make a plan to study this book. Study some of the tests for the sake of fun without time limitation and work on some others assuming that you are taking the actual test. Set a time limit, lock yourself in a room away from distractors and test your performance. Roughly speaking, if you want to push your score half a score, you need to review at least ten reading tests. Record your progress and scores achieved. At first, it might have some fluctuations but after a while you see a new pattern, a stable change. Have an eye on the mean of ten tests done rather than one test score. Finally, remember you need effort and time and you should not expect miracles and rely on chance and luck! It is hoped that this book marks a turning point in your life.

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General Remarks

Reading is one of the essential skills to develop. Many candidates believe that they are very good at reading, and some think they can improve reading skill over a short period. However, when you look at Test Record Form (TRF) you find out many candidates are not good at reading as compared with other skills.

If you want to improve your reading skill you should improve your vocabulary knowledge, grammar, background and world knowledge, speed, and strategies. To improve your vocabulary you can read magazines and newspapers or more specifically IELTS reading texts. Having grammar knowledge is very essential to understand texts. Words like *however*, *while*, *but* change the direction of thought; expressions like *in the same vein*, *likewise* show parallel lines of thought. Structural clues are at times eye openers and reveal many points. IELTS reading materials are real texts extracted from magazines and journals. Thus, those who develop their background and world knowledge through reading different texts will surely get a higher reading score compared with those who do not read such texts in everyday encounters. Some people are lucky that because of their academic, career or professional demands they have to be in touch with lots of reading.

Having a good knowledge of vocabulary, grammar and world might be essential but not enough to get a good score on reading. You should improve your reading speed and turn to a faster reader by exercising your eyes, reading novels and newspapers at high speed to get only the general meaning or some specific details of texts. Moreover, you have to consciously or unconsciously strengthen your reading strategies. Guessing from context, skimming to get a general overview, scanning to locate subtle details and anticipating the forthcoming texts are all essential strategies to reinforce.

Another important fact not to be neglected is getting familiar with the format, timing and instructions of tests. Mock exams are the actual past administrated tests released by exam centres to give the prospective candidates an understanding of what a text includes. It will be wise of you to buy such tests or register for such tests at accredited language institutes or IELTS centres and sub-centres. If you participate in such exams you get the know-how and knack of the test, shed your fear and evaluate yourself. It is recommended to take part in such exams periodically to check your progress and achievement rate. One essential skill you develop through tests is time management. Time should be acquired during mock tests, not real tests.

Reviewing practice tests, finding your weak and strong points and improving your understanding through practice effect are all essential. If you are weak at a type of question (Yes/No/Not Given) consult an expert or a classmate. Attending classes or having tutors might improve your incentive, confidence, strategies and study habits. As a final remark the more you get involved in practice tests, seek expert advice and improve your knowledge through practice the more you improve your chance of success.

The General Reading Test

The General reading test is a 60-minute test to test your reading skills. There are three sections in the reading test. Each section consists of a reading passage and 13 or 14 questions. There are 40 questions in total. The whole test lasts an hour and you are advised to spend about 18 minutes on the first passage, 20 minutes on the second passage and 22 minutes on the last passage. Section one is usually easier to follow, so it is recommended to start with that. IELTS reading passages are long and each one is approximately 900 words. Remember, you can write your answers on the question booklet but you must write all your final answers on the reading answer sheet.

On the test day after the listening test is over, you'll be given the reading test and the exam supervisor writes the start and finish times on the board. As you are busy answering the questions, to your shock the supervisor gives you a ten-minute warning before the end of the test. This is really stress-inducing!

You must write your answers in pencil on the answer sheet. Unfortunately, unlike the listening test, there's no transfer time. After an hour when the test is over you have to hand in the answer sheet. So you can either write the answers of each section as you are proceeding during the time limit (recommended) or save 5 minutes to transfer the answers (not recommended).

The passages are of general interest and related to general subjects. They deal with global issues, such as environment, language, tourism, etc. Some topics may seem unfamiliar to you or may contain technical vocabulary. You have to learn to ignore unknown words and guess their meaning.

Each test section contains two to four question types, so in one complete reading test you could get from 8 to 12 different question types. These are the main skills that IELTS tests:

- Reading quickly to get a general idea or find a particular word
- Finding factual information
- Understanding themes and main ideas
- Identifying views, arguments and claims
- Identifying overall theme of the passage
- Finding given information
- Finding sequence of actions

It is recommended to do the sections in the order they come. First, read the passage title, headings and sub-headings to get a general idea about the passage. Then read through the questions quickly. Try to understand the questions; underline the key words. Then, attack the passage and try to find the relevant section containing the main idea and the key words of the questions.

To get a higher score and improve your reading skill, you should read as widely as you can and practice reading quickly to get the main ideas. Try to get familiar with ideas and vocabulary related to global interest topics.

Your spelling must be correct and your handwriting must be clear. The answers must come from the reading passages. You should not use abbreviations, if they are not in the passage. Pay attention to singularity and plurality.