



IELTS Academic Reading

Sample questions



Sample Academic Reading *Summary Completion* (selecting from a list of words or phrases)

[Note: This is an extract from a Part 3 text about language.]

© Guy Deutscher, Random House Adult Trade Publishing Group. 2006

'This Marvellous Invention'

Of all mankind's manifold creations, language must take pride of place. Other inventions – the wheel, agriculture, sliced bread – may have transformed our material existence, but the advent of language is what made us human. Compared to language, all other inventions pale in significance, since everything we have ever achieved depends on language and originates from it. Without language, we could never have embarked on our ascent to unparalleled power over all other animals, and even over nature itself.

But language is foremost not just because it came first. In its own right it is a tool of extraordinary sophistication, yet based on an idea of ingenious simplicity: 'this marvellous invention of composing out of twenty-five or thirty sounds that infinite variety of expressions which, whilst having in themselves no likeness to what is in our mind, allow us to disclose to others its whole secret, and to make known to those who cannot penetrate it all that we imagine, and all the various stirrings of our soul'. This was how, in 1660, the renowned French grammarians of the Port-Royal abbey near Versailles distilled the essence of language, and no one since has celebrated more eloquently the magnitude of its achievement. Even so, there is just one flaw in all these hymns of praise, for the homage to language's unique accomplishment conceals a simple yet critical incongruity. Language is mankind's greatest invention – except, of course, that it was never invented. This apparent paradox is at the core of our fascination with language, and it holds many of its secrets.

Questions 1 – 4

Complete the summary using the list of words, **A-G**, below.

Write the correct letter, **A-G**, in boxes 1-4 on your answer sheet.

The importance of language

The wheel is one invention that has had a major impact on **1** aspects of life, but no impact has been as **2** as that of language. Language is very **3** , yet composed of just a small number of sounds. Language appears to be **4** to use. However, its sophistication is often overlooked.

A difficult

D admired

G fundamental

B complex

E material

C original

F easy



Sample Academic Reading *Flow-chart Completion (selecting words from the text)*

[Note: This is an extract from a Part 3 text about the effect of a low-calorie diet on the ageing process.]

Adapted from 'The Serious Search for an Anti-Aging Pill'. Copyright © 2006 Scientific American, a division of Nature America, Inc. All rights reserved.

No treatment on the market today has been proved to slow human aging. But one intervention, consumption of a low-calorie* yet nutritionally balanced diet, works incredibly well in a broad range of animals, increasing longevity and prolonging good health. Those findings suggest that caloric restriction could delay aging and increase longevity in humans, too. But what if someone could create a pill that mimicked the physiological effects of eating less without actually forcing people to eat less, a 'caloric-restriction mimetic'?

The best-studied candidate for a caloric-restriction mimetic, 2DG (2-deoxy-D-glucose), works by interfering with the way cells process glucose. It has proved toxic at some doses in animals and so cannot be used in humans. But it has demonstrated that chemicals can replicate the effects of caloric restriction; the trick is finding the right one.

Cells use the glucose from food to generate ATP (adenosine triphosphate), the molecule that powers many activities in the body. By limiting food intake, caloric restriction minimizes the amount of glucose entering cells and decreases ATP generation. When 2DG is administered to animals that eat normally, glucose reaches cells in abundance but the drug prevents most of it from being processed and thus reduces ATP synthesis. Researchers have proposed several explanations for why interruption of glucose processing and ATP production might retard aging. One possibility relates to the ATP-making machinery's emission of free radicals, which are thought to contribute to aging and to such age-related diseases as cancer by damaging cells. Reduced operation of the machinery should limit their production and thereby constrain the damage. Another hypothesis suggests that decreased processing of glucose could indicate to cells that food is scarce (even if it isn't) and induce them to shift into an anti-aging mode that emphasizes preservation of the organism over such 'luxuries' as growth and reproduction.

* calorie: a measure of the energy value of food

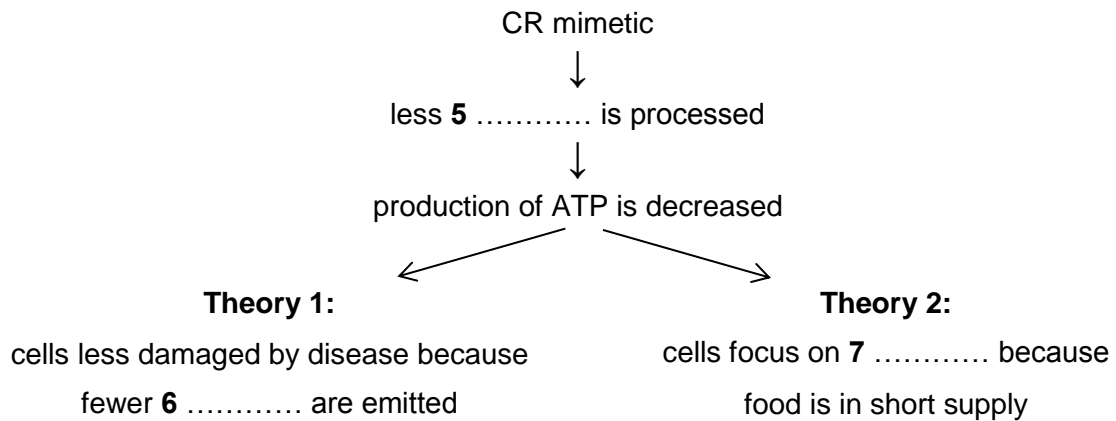
Questions 5 – 7

Complete the flow-chart below.

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

Write your answers in boxes 1-3 on your answer sheet.

How a caloric-restriction mimetic works





Sample Academic Reading *Identifying Information (True/False/Not Given)*

[Note: This is an extract from a Part 1 text about the scientist Marie Curie.]

Adapted with permission from Encyclopaedia Britannica, © 2007 by Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc.

The life and work of Marie Curie

Marie Curie is probably the most famous woman scientist who has ever lived. Born Maria Sklodowska in Poland in 1867, she is famous for her work on radioactivity, and was twice a winner of the Nobel Prize. With her husband, Pierre Curie, and Henri Becquerel, she was awarded the 1903 Nobel Prize for Physics, and was then sole winner of the 1911 Nobel Prize for Chemistry. She was the first woman to win a Nobel Prize.

From childhood, Marie was remarkable for her prodigious memory, and at the age of 16 won a gold medal on completion of her secondary education. Because her father lost his savings through bad investment, she then had to take work as a teacher. From her earnings she was able to finance her sister Bronia's medical studies in Paris, on the understanding that Bronia would, in turn, later help her to get an education.

In 1891 this promise was fulfilled and Marie went to Paris and began to study at the Sorbonne (the University of Paris). She often worked far into the night and lived on little more than bread and butter and tea. She came first in the examination in the physical sciences in 1893, and in 1894 was placed second in the examination in mathematical sciences. It was not until the spring of that year that she was introduced to Pierre Curie.

Questions 8 – 10

Do the following statements agree with the information given in Reading Passage 1?

In boxes 1-3 on your answer sheet, write

TRUE	<i>if the statement agrees with the information</i>
FALSE	<i>if the statement contradicts the information</i>
NOT GIVEN	<i>if there is no information on this</i>

- 8** Marie Curie's husband was a joint winner of both Marie's Nobel Prizes.
- 9** Marie became interested in science when she was a child.
- 10** Marie was able to attend the Sorbonne because of her sister's financial contribution.



Sample Academic Reading *Multiple Choice (more than one answer)*

[Note: This is an extract from a Part 1 text about older people in the workforce.]

© The Economist Newspaper Limited, London, 1999

Clearly, when older people do heavy physical work, their age may affect their productivity. But other skills may increase with age, including many that are crucial for good management, such as an ability to handle people diplomatically, to run a meeting or to spot a problem before it blows up. Peter Hicks, who co-ordinates OECD* work on the policy implications of ageing, says that plenty of research suggests older people are paid more because they are worth more.

And the virtues of the young may be exaggerated. 'The few companies that have kept on older workers find they have good judgement and their productivity is good,' says Peter Peterson, author of a recent book on the impact of ageing. 'Besides, their education standards are much better than those of today's young high-school graduates.' Companies may say that older workers are not worth training because they are reaching the end of their working lives; in fact, young people tend to switch jobs so frequently that they offer the worst returns on training. The median age for employer-driven training is the late 40s and early 50s, and this training goes mainly to managers.

* OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

Questions 11 and 12

Choose **TWO** letters, **A-G**.

Write the correct letters in boxes 11 and 12 on your answer sheet.

The list below gives some of the advantages of employing older workers.

Which **TWO** advantages are mentioned by the writer of the text?

- A** They are less likely to be involved in careless accidents.
- B** They can predict areas that may cause trouble in the future.
- C** They are able to train younger workers.
- D** They can deal with unexpected problems.
- E** They are more conscientious.
- F** They are prepared to work for lower salaries.
- G** They are more skilled in personal relationships.

Questions 13 and 14

Choose **TWO** letters, **A-F**.

Write the correct letters in boxes 13 and 14 on your answer sheet.

The list below gives some of the disadvantages of employing younger workers.

Which **TWO** disadvantages are mentioned by the writer of the text?

- A** They are too confident of their own skills.
- B** They may injure themselves.
- C** They do not stay with the same company for very long.
- D** Their training has been too theoretical.
- E** They are not as well educated as older workers.
- F** They demand higher salaries.



Sample Academic Reading *Multiple Choice (one answer)*

[Note: This is an extract from a Part 1 text about older people in the workforce.]

© The Economist Newspaper Limited, London, 1999

The general assumption is that older workers are paid more in spite of, rather than because of, their productivity. That might partly explain why, when employers are under pressure to cut costs, they persuade a 55-year old to take early retirement. Take away seniority-based pay scales, and older workers may become a much more attractive employment proposition. But most employers and many workers are uncomfortable with the idea of reducing someone's pay in later life – although manual workers on piece-rates often earn less as they get older. So retaining the services of older workers may mean employing them in different ways.

One innovation was devised by IBM Belgium. Faced with the need to cut staff costs, and having decided to concentrate cuts on 55 to 60-year olds, IBM set up a separate company called Skill Team, which re-employed any of the early retired who wanted to go on working up to the age of 60. An employee who joined Skill Team at the age of 55 on a five-year contract would work for 58% of his time, over the full period, for 88% of his last IBM salary. The company offered services to IBM, thus allowing it to retain access to some of the intellectual capital it would otherwise have lost.

The best way to tempt the old to go on working may be to build on such 'bridge' jobs: part-time or temporary employment that creates a more gradual transition from full-time work to retirement. Studies have found that, in the United States, nearly half of all men and women who had been in full-time jobs in middle age moved into such 'bridge' jobs at the end of their working lives. In general, it is the best-paid and worst-paid who carry on working. There seem to be two very different types of bridge job-holder – those who continue working because they have to and those who continue working because they want to, even though they could afford to retire.

If the job market grows more flexible, the old may find more jobs that suit them. Often, they will be self-employed. Sometimes, they may start their own businesses: a study by David Storey of Warwick University found that in Britain 70% of businesses started by people over 55 survived, compared with an overall national average of only 19%. But whatever pattern of employment they choose, in the coming years the skills of these 'grey workers' will have to be increasingly acknowledged and rewarded.

Questions 15 – 18

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

Write the correct letter in boxes 15-18 on your answer sheet.

- 15** In paragraph one, the writer suggests that companies could consider
- A** abolishing pay schemes that are based on age.
 - B** avoiding pay that is based on piece-rates.
 - C** increasing pay for older workers.
 - D** equipping older workers with new skills.
- 16** Skill Team is an example of a company which
- A** offers older workers increases in salary.
 - B** allows people to continue working for as long as they want.
 - C** allows the expertise of older workers to be put to use.
 - D** treats older and younger workers equally.
- 17** According to the writer, 'bridge' jobs
- A** tend to attract people in middle-salary ranges.
 - B** are better paid than some full-time jobs.
 - C** originated in the United States.
 - D** appeal to distinct groups of older workers.
- 18** David Storey's study found that
- A** people demand more from their work as they get older.
 - B** older people are good at running their own businesses.
 - C** an increasing number of old people are self-employed.
 - D** few young people have their own businesses.

IELTS Reading Answer Sheet

Candidate Name []

Candidate No. [][][][][][][] Centre No. [][][][][][][]

Test Module Academic General Training

Test Date Day [][] Month [][] Year [][][][]

Reading Reading Reading Reading Reading Reading Reading

Table with 40 rows (1-40) and 3 columns: Question Number, Answer Line, and Marking (✓/✗). Includes a large diagonal watermark 'Sample Answer Sheet'.

Marker 2 Signature: [] Marker 1 Signature: [] Reading Total: [][]



IELTS™



IELTS Academic Reading

Answers



Sample Academic Reading *Summary Completion* (selecting from a list of words or phrases)

Answers

- 1 E ■ material
- 2 G ■ fundamental
- 3 B ■ complex
- 4 F ■ easy



Sample Academic Reading *Flow-chart Completion (selecting words from the text)*

Answers

- 1 glucose
- 2 free radicals
- 3 preservation



Sample Academic Reading *Identifying Information (True/False/Not Given)*

Answers

- 1 FALSE
- 2 NOT GIVEN
- 3 TRUE



Sample Academic Reading *Multiple Choice (more than one answer)*

Answers

1&2 *IN EITHER ORDER*

B ■ They can predict areas that may cause trouble in the future

G ■ They are more skilled in personal relationships

3&4 *IN EITHER ORDER*

C ■ They do not stay with the same company for very long

E ■ They are not as well educated as older workers



Sample Academic Reading *Multiple Choice (one answer)*

Answers

- 1 A ■ abolishing pay schemes that are based on age
- 2 C ■ allows the expertise of older workers to be put to use
- 3 D ■ appeal to distinct groups of older workers
- 4 B ■ older people are good at running their own business