

IELTS Reading tactics discussion questions and tips

Discuss these aspects of the reading task(s) that you did or have in front of you:

What things about the task(s) make them difficult to complete? How can you tackle those things?

What things about the task(s) can make them easier to complete? How can you use those things to help you?

-----fold, cover or cut -----

Put these things into the two categories above. Some things could be considered both a help and a hindrance, in which case you should put them in both categories.

1. You can write anything you like on the question sheet
2. All questions other than matching ones are in the same order as the text, including when there are different kinds of questions
3. The answers for one kind of task are sometimes together in just two or three paragraphs
4. Gaps should usually be filled with exactly the words in the text, although grammatical changes are occasionally needed and the words surrounding the gap will be different from the text
5. In matching tasks, there are always extra options which you don't need
6. Most answers are in between half a sentence and two sentences of text (rather than being spread through the text)
7. Most people don't have time to read through the text first
8. The information to answer the questions is not spread evenly through the text
9. The wording of most questions is different from the text
10. There is sometimes one question at the end summarizing the whole text

Discuss how you can use the things that make the exam easier and tackle the things that make the exam more difficult.

What other tactics can you use in the exam?

What should you first do when you open the Reading paper or turn to a new text and/ or task?

What should you do after that, and in what order?

How can you save time?/ How can you make sure you spend the right amount of time on the task?

What should you do if you are short of time?/ How can you make it easier to guess?

What can you do if you have extra time?/ How can you check that your answers are correct?

How can you make exam reading practice that you do at home realistic exam practice?

What should you do after you check your answers?

How can you choose which vocabulary is and isn't suitable to learn?

How can you best prepare for the IELTS reading exam outside of class?

Choose a top five from this list:

- ✧ Doing lots of IELTS reading test papers
- ✧ Doing online IELTS reading practice
- ✧ Doing the official IELTS sample test papers
- ✧ Doing the same IELTS reading test paper again later
- ✧ IELTS textbook readings
- ✧ Learning academic vocabulary with a self-study book like Academic Vocabulary in Use
- ✧ Reading English-language school or university textbooks (e.g. geography textbooks)
- ✧ Reading IELTS reading texts again in more detail to make sure you understand everything
- ✧ Reading IELTS reading tips online
- ✧ Reading Wikipedia and other encyclopedias
- ✧ Reading academic journals (e.g. Nature or New England Journal of Medicine)
- ✧ Reading fiction
- ✧ Reading news magazines like Newsweek and Time
- ✧ Reading newspapers
- ✧ Reading popular science magazines (and the equivalent for other subjects such as BBC History Magazine and National Geographic)
- ✧ Using an IELTS vocabulary book
- ✧ Watching English language documentaries with English subtitles
- ✧ Working your way through a specific IELTS reading book

How should you go about reading those things? How can you choose vocabulary to learn?