

Student's Notes

IELTS: Reading

You should always read the instructions for each section in the reading test. For example, the word limit in a sentence completion exercise may vary from section to section. In a heading question, you may be able to use the headings more than once. **BE CAREFUL**, consider the following:

- the type of answer you have to give, i.e. gap-fill, multiple-choice etc.
- whether or not the question requires a specific or general answer
- what form the answer should take (is it a number, a date, a reason etc.)
- a claim is a statement of something as a fact
- a view is a personal opinion, belief or idea about something
- an attitude is a way of feeling, thinking or behaving

TIMING

For many candidates, timing is a problem. **DO NOT** spend more than the allocated time on each section. Remember that each section gets harder.

If you have a difficult question, do not ponder too long over it, move on. You could have answered two or three more questions in the time you have wasted. Go back later to the ones you have left blank.

Try to spend no longer than one minute finding each answer.

You may wish to mark the answer you are unsure of in some way so that, if you have time at the end of the reading test, you can check the answers again.

Read quickly; try using a pen to help your eyes move across the page.

APPROACHES TO READING

Skimming: To get the general idea, look for titles/paragraph headings. Look through the whole paper first. Consider the purpose of the text while you read. Ask yourself how you could reduce the reading to one sentence. You should not worry about detail at the first reading. You will be able to find details much more quickly at the second reading.

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Scanning: Use a highlighter as you read for key points or sentences. Look for specific information, key words, numbers, figures, names, place names and times. Remember, you do not have the time to read every word, you are only looking for specific information. Read the first paragraph which often focuses on the main idea, while the first sentence of each paragraph usually expresses the key points of the paragraph. The final paragraph usually provides a summary of the entire passage.

Approach the questions in any way you like. You can read the passage before the questions or the questions before the passage, whichever you find more beneficial. Underline key words in the questions and find the key words or synonyms in the text.

Remember that the information upon which you base your answers must be in the passage.