Preliminary (PET): Reading

Part 1: You will need to answer five multiple-choice questions. Each question has a different text. The texts in this section include public notes, emails, personal messages and notes. The context of the text is usually given, for example a notice from a cinema.

Read the text and look at the picture or writing and think why it was written. Read the three choices, decide and mark your choice, making sure that you understand why the other two options cannot be correct. Remember that the WRONG answers often contain the same words as the text so read the options carefully. Notices often say what you MUST and MUSTN'T DO. Messages may include names; decide who is writing to whom and the relationship.

Part 2: This section contains five descriptions and eight short texts. Each description is of a person/people. The eight texts contain information on books, holidays, websites, etc. You have to match the person in the description with the most suitable text. The correct choice MUST include ALL the requirements of the description.

People often find this part takes quite a long time, so when doing a practice test try leaving Part 2 to the end and see if this helps your time management.

Discover the topic of the eight texts by reading the instructions. Read each description and circle their criteria and limits. Scan the text deleting any that are outside the limits. Then concentrate on the remaining descriptions. When you have found what you think is the answer, check it against the description and be sure that all the criteria are met. To save time, DO NOT read all the eight texts at the beginning as the descriptions will tell you all you need to know. MAKE SURE all criteria are in your answer and then mark it on your answer sheet.

Part 3: This part contains ten sentences and a long text. You have to decide whether the sentence is (A) correct; or (B) incorrect. The text focuses on information and facts. There are no NEGATIVE sentences.

Look at the title and the instructions to see what the text is about. Highlight the topic sentence in each paragraph to get the general meaning of the text. Find the sentence that answers the question and highlight the key words, then decide whether your answer is going to be (A) or (B). Just because you may have four (A) answers in a row, do not think that the next one must be (B). Transfer your answers to the answer sheet making sure that you have matched the right question answer to the right number. Do not leave the task of transferring answers to the end of the paper, as it is only the marks on the answer sheet that are counted.
Part 4: This section contains a text and five multiple-choice questions. You will need to read both the text and questions carefully. The text usually focuses on the writer’s attitude or opinion. A good tip is to remember that the questions follow the order of the text, so if you find the answer to number 24 and you have not found the answer to number 23, go back and search in an earlier part of the text. The questions test different things: Question 21 is about the writer’s purpose of writing; question 25 focuses on the overall meaning.

Highlight the topic sentence to get the general meaning of each paragraph. Then read a second time in detail. Try answering questions 21 and 25 first and then work through questions 22-24. WRONG answers often contain the same words as the text. Read the questions very carefully so you do not misunderstand the questions. Mark your answers as you go along, then when you have answered all five questions, transfer your answers to the answer sheet.

Part 5: This section consists of a short text and ten multiple-choice gap-fill questions. They mainly test vocabulary and some grammar. The text is usually factual.

Read the text once for meaning and think about the spaces. Look through the questions before you read the text again. Always read what goes before and after the space as it MUST fit grammatically. Check for pronouns before the space and prepositions after it. For vocabulary, the words may be similar in meaning so you must decide why some do not fit. For grammar, check tense or number earlier in the sentence. Make sure that you have transferred all of your answers to your answer sheet.

The Reading test should take about 50 minutes. If you have not finished the reading, go onto the writing after this time as you must attempt all parts of the test. If you have left any blanks in the reading, make a guess as you could be right and gain a mark.