

Monday, September 14, 2015

IELTS Reading: 'paragraph headings' keywords

Over the weekend I ran an IELTS preparation course here in Manchester. We did some good work on 'paragraph headings' questions, and one of the exercises that we used was test 2, passage 1 in Cambridge IELTS book 10.

Here are the keywords from the 'paragraph headings' section in that test:

Keywords in the headings	Similar words in the paragraphs
the time and place	Britain, 18th century
conditions required	factors need to be present
two keys to industrial revolution	tea and beer fuelled the revolution
an increase in population	a burst in population growth
changes in drinking habits	the poor turned to water and gin
comparisons with Japan	Japan was also... and also...
fear of unemployment	afraid... put people out of work

Note: I always recommend doing paragraph matching questions last. They are much easier if you are already familiar with the passage, having done other question sections first.

Monday, August 24, 2015

IELTS Reading: keywords (book 9, test 2)

Here's a keyword table for test 2 in Cambridge IELTS book 9:

Keywords in questions	Similar words in the passage
national policy initiative	New Zealand strategy
global team effort	international working party
a hypothesis	researchers have suggested
worldwide regulations	international standards
more at risk than others	extremely vulnerable
auditory problems	hearing loss / hearing impairment
current teaching methods	modern teaching practices
cooling systems	air-conditioning units

Even if you don't have a copy of the book, I think you can still learn something from this table. Look at the use of synonyms and similar

words (e.g. worldwide / international, regulations / standards, current / modern).

Also, did you know the meanings of words like vulnerable, auditory and impairment? Look these words up in a dictionary, and see if you can use them in your own sentences.

Monday, August 10, 2015

IELTS Reading: advice and techniques

I've published this lesson before, but I think it's worth repeating it for people who have been asking me for reading tips. Here's my list of advice and techniques for IELTS reading:

- 1 Don't read the whole text; you haven't got enough time. Just go straight to the questions.
- 2 'Paragraph' questions are much easier if you do them last. Do other sections first.
- 3 The answers to most questions should be in the correct order in the text, so you don't need to go back to the beginning to start looking for the next answer.
- 4 Read all instructions carefully.
- 5 Look for 'keywords'. There are usually words in the questions that are similar to words you need to find in the text. For example, if the text contains the word "global", the question might use the word "international". If you find the similar words, you have probably found the answer.
- 6 You must get to the end and answer every question. If you don't finish, you might miss some easy points.

Some questions are difficult because their aim is to separate band 8 and band 9. Don't waste time on difficult questions. Miss them, finish the exam, and return to them at the end.

Monday, July 20, 2015

IELTS Reading: more keywords

The table below shows 'keywords' from the exercise in this lesson. Notice, in particular, the different ways to describe years.

Keywords in questions	Similar words in the passage
became popular	spread around the world
in the 19th century	by the end of the 1800s
over the last 200 years	in the 19th and 20th centuries
the general public	the masses
depending on the country	vary widely between countries
may be funded by	funding may come from

Monday, June 15, 2015

IELTS Reading: recent keywords

Here's a keyword table for the two most recent exercises that I put here on the blog. Click [here](#) to see one of them, and [here](#) to check the other.

Keywords in questions	Similar words in the passage
Dutch maps	Dutch cartography (means 'mapmaking')
create maps	a print-out of the map appears
to order	at the click of a button
increase in	has doubled
work-related stress	stress related claims by employees
effects on body and behaviour	symptoms manifested physiologically and psychologically

Note: Don't just have a quick look at this table. Look carefully at the vocabulary, and make a note of anything useful.

Monday, June 01, 2015

IELTS Reading: finding and understanding

IELTS reading is really a test of 2 things:

7 Can you **find** the part of the text that contains the answer?

8 Do you **understand** that part of the text?

Finding

You need to be able to find the right part of the text quickly. I practise this a lot with my students: we decide which words in the question we need to search for, then we try to locate those words (or words with the same meaning) in the text.

Understanding

When you have found where the answer is, you need to read that part of the text carefully. Read the sentences before and after the keywords that you found. Then it becomes a test of your vocabulary knowledge: if you don't understand the words that you are reading, it will be difficult to get the right answer.