IELTS Reading Strategies

TO SOLVE MATCHING SENTENCE ENDING QUESTIONS:

For this type of task, you need to understand how the idea are linked within the reading passage. This task tests your logical ability as well as your understanding of grammar. The entire passage needs detailed reading and understanding of cohesive devices. There are several ways of linking ideas in a text. Look at the following examples: the findings, as a result..., however...., These questions are commonly asked and account for about 3-4 marks in each passage. Mostly students prefer to solve them later since they need to understand the entire passage well. With our tips & practise papers we are sure you're going to enjoy solving such question and get correct answers

GUIDELINES TO SOLVE:

1. Skim read the entire passage to get the overall idea of the passage. (5 min)
2. Understand what kind of information is given in each paragraph. You can give headings to each paragraph for your self-understanding. This way it's easy for you to locate the paragraph which contains the information asked and also to link the ideas together.
3. Read the first statement given for the Matching sentence ending questions.
4. Underline the relevant part of the statement to help you locate your answer.
5. Scan the passage and locate the information in the sentence beginnings.
6. The words mentioned in the question are directly taken from the passage so locating them shouldn't be that difficult. They can even use synonyms and paraphrases to test your knowledge of grammar.
7. Carefully read the relevant part of the passage, and then choose the best sentence ending.
8. Spend less than 1 min to analyse each statement.

Let's look at the application of the above-mentioned guidelines for the following passage below.

Practice Reading 1.1



Collecting Ant Specimens

Collecting ants can be as simple as picking up stray ones and placing them in a glass jar, or as complicated as completing an exhaustive survey of all species present in an area and estimating their relative abundances. The exact method used will depend on the final purpose of the collections. For taxonomy, or classification, long series, from a single nest, which contain all castes (workers, including majors and minors, and, if present, queens and males) are desirable, to allow the determination of variation within species. For ecological studies, the most important factor is collecting identifiable samples of as many of the different species present as possible. Unfortunately, these methods are not always compatible. The taxonomist sometimes overlooks whole species in favour of those groups currently under study, while the ecologist often collects only a limited number of specimens of each species, thus reducing their value for taxonomic investigations.

To collect as wide a range of species as possible, several methods must be used. These include hand collecting, using baits to attract the ants, ground litter sampling, and the use of pitfall traps. Hand collecting consists of searching for ants everywhere they are likely to occur. This includes on the ground, under rocks, logs or other objects on the ground, in rotten wood on the ground or on trees, in vegetation, on tree trunks and under bark. When possible, collections should be made from nests or foraging columns and at least 20 to 25 individuals collected. This will ensure that all individuals are of the same species, and so increase their value for detailed studies. Since some species are largely nocturnal, collecting should not be confined to daytime. Specimens are collected using an aspirator (often called a pooter), forceps, a fine, moistened paint brush, or fingers, if the ants are known not to sting. Individual insects are placed in plastic or glass tubes (1.5–3.0 ml capacity for small ants, 5–8 ml for larger ants) containing 75% to 95% ethanol. Plastic tubes with secure tops are better than glass because they are lighter, and do not break as easily if mishandled.

Baits can be used to attract and concentrate foragers. This often increases the number of individuals collected and attracts species that are otherwise elusive. Sugars and meats or oils will attract different species and a range should be utilised. These baits can be placed either on the ground or on the trunks of trees or large shrubs. When placed on the ground, baits should be situated on small paper cards or other flat, light-coloured surfaces, or in test-tubes or vials. This makes it easier to spot ants and to capture them before they can escape into the surrounding leaf litter.

Many ants are small and forage primarily in the layer of leaves and other debris on the ground. Collecting these species by hand can be difficult. One of the most successful ways to collect them is to gather the leaf litter in which they are foraging and extract the ants from it. This is most commonly done by placing leaf litter on a screen over a large funnel, often under some heat. As the leaf litter dries from above, ants (and other animals) move downward and eventually fall out the bottom and are collected in alcohol placed below the funnel. This method works especially well in rain forests and marshy areas. A method of improving the catch when using a funnel is to sift the leaf litter through a coarse screen before placing it above the funnel. This will concentrate the litter and remove larger leaves and twigs. It will also allow more litter to be sampled when using a limited number of funnels.

The pitfall trap is another commonly used tool for collecting ants. A pitfall trap can be any small container placed in the ground with the top level with the surrounding surface and filled with a preservative. Ants are collected when they fall into the trap while foraging. The diameter of the traps can vary from about 18 mm to 10 cm and the number used can vary from a few to several hundred. The size of the traps used is influenced largely by personal preference (although larger sizes are generally better), while the number will be determined by the study being undertaken. The preservative used is usually ethylene glycol or propylene glycol, as alcohol will evaporate quickly and the traps will dry out. One advantage of pitfall traps is that they can be used to collect over a period of time with minimal maintenance and intervention. One disadvantage is that some species are not collected as they either avoid the traps or do not commonly encounter them while foraging.

Complete each sentence with the correct ending, A-I, below.

Write the correct letter, A-I. **The TWO questions below are solved for you.**

1. Disapene scale insects feed on
2. Neodunetia sangawani ate
3. Leaf-eating hispides blighted
4. An Argentinian weevil may be successful in wiping out
5. Salvinia molesta plagues

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A. Forage grass
B. Rice fields
C. Coconut trees
D. Fruit trees
E. Water hyacinth
F. Parthenium weed
G. Brazilian beetles
H. Grass-scale insects
I. Larval parasites

Solved Examples:

1. Disapene scale insects feed on _____.

Disapene scale insects are mentioned in **Paragraph I** which talks about the use of biological control by CIBC on parasites. The answer can be traced from the following sentence, 'CIBC is also perfecting the technique for breeding parasites that prey on 'disapene scale' insects – notorious **defoliants of fruits trees** in the US and India.' Here the synonym used for the word defoliants in the question is to feed on. This indicates that the correct sentence ending for the above statement is **fruit trees** that is **Option D**

2. Neodunetia sangawani ate _____

Neodunetia sangawani insect is mentioned in **Paragraph J**. The answer can be traced from the following sentence, 'A natural predator indigenous to India, Neodunetia sangawani, was found useful in controlling Rhodes **grass-scale insect** that was devouring forage grass in many parts of the US.' The parasite was useful in controlling Rhodes grass-scale insect means that the parasite feeds on it. This indicates that the correct sentence ending for the above statement is **grass-scale insect** that is **Option H**

Practice Exercises 1.1

Complete each sentence with the correct ending, A-I, below.

Write the correct letter, A-I.

1. Disapene scale insects feed on
2. Neodunetia sangawani ate
3. Leaf-eating hispides blighted
4. An Argentinian weevil may be successful in wiping out
5. Salvinia molesta plagues

J. Forage grass
K. Rice fields
L. Coconut trees
M. Fruit trees
N. Water hyacinth
O. Parthenium weed
P. Brazilian beetles
Q. Grass-scale insects
R. Larval parasites

Practice reading 1.2

What's so funny?

John McCrone reviews recent research on humour

The joke comes over the headphones: 'Which side of a dog has the most hair? The left.' No, not funny. Try again. 'Which side of a dog has the most hair? The outside.' Hah! The punchline is silly yet fitting, tempting a smile, even a laugh. Laughter has always struck people as deeply mysterious, perhaps pointless. The writer Arthur Koestler dubbed it the luxury reflex: 'unique in that it serves no apparent biological purpose'.

Theories about humour have an ancient pedigree. Plato expressed the idea that humour is simply a delighted feeling of superiority over others. Kant and Freud felt that joke-telling relies on building up a psychic tension which is safely punctured by the ludicrousness of the punchline. But most modern humour theorists have settled on some version of Aristotle's belief that jokes are based on a reaction to or resolution of incongruity, when the punchline is either a nonsense or, though appearing silly, has a clever second meaning.

Graeme Ritchie, a computational linguist in Edinburgh, studies the linguistic structure of jokes in order to understand not only humour but language understanding and reasoning in machines. He says that while there is no single format for jokes, many revolve around a sudden and surprising conceptual shift. A comedian will present a situation followed by an unexpected interpretation that is also apt.

So even if a punchline sounds silly, the listener can see there is a clever semantic fit and that sudden mental 'Aha!' is the buzz that makes us laugh. Viewed from this angle, humour is just a form of creative insight, a sudden leap to a new perspective.

However, there is another type of laughter, the laughter of social appeasement and it is important to understand this too. Play is a crucial part of development in most young mammals. Rats produce ultrasonic squeaks to prevent their scuffles turning nasty. Chimpanzees have a 'play-face' – a gaping expression accompanied by a panting 'ah, ah' noise. In humans, these signals have mutated into smiles and laughs. Researchers believe social situations, rather than cognitive events such as jokes, trigger these instinctual markers of play or appeasement. People laugh on fairground rides or when tickled to flag a play situation, whether they feel amused or not.

Both social and cognitive types of laughter tap into the same expressive machinery in our brains, the emotion and motor circuits that produce smiles and excited vocalisations. However, if cognitive laughter is the product of more general thought processes, it should result from more expansive brain activity.

Psychologist Vinod Goel investigated humour using the new technique of 'single event' functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI). An MRI scanner uses magnetic fields and radio waves to track the changes in oxygenated blood that accompany mental activity. Until recently, MRI scanners needed several minutes of activity and so could not be used to track rapid thought processes such as comprehending a joke. New developments now allow half-second 'snapshots' of all sorts of reasoning and problem-solving activities.

Although Goel felt being inside a brain scanner was hardly the ideal place for appreciating a joke, he found evidence that understanding a joke involves a widespread mental shift. His scans showed that at the beginning of a joke the listener's prefrontal cortex lit up, particularly the right prefrontal believed to be critical for problem solving. But there was also activity in the temporal lobes at the side of the head (consistent with attempts to rouse stored knowledge) and in many other brain areas. Then when the punchline arrived, a new area sprang to life – the orbital prefrontal cortex. This patch of brain tucked behind the orbits of the eyes is associated with evaluating information.

Making a rapid emotional assessment of the events of the moment is an extremely demanding job for the brain, animal or human. Energy and arousal levels may need to be retuned in the blink of an eye. These abrupt changes will produce either positive or negative feelings. The orbital cortex, the region that becomes active in Goel's experiment, seems the best candidate for the site that feeds such feelings into higher-level thought processes, with its close connections to the brain's sub-cortical arousal apparatus and centres of metabolic control.

All warm-blooded animals make constant tiny adjustments in arousal in response to external events, but humans, who have developed a much more complicated internal life as a result of language, respond emotionally not only to their surroundings, but to their own thoughts. Whenever a sought-for answer snaps into place, there is a shudder of pleased recognition. Creative discovery being pleasurable, humans have learned to find ways of milking this natural response. The fact that jokes tap into our general evaluative machinery explains why the line between funny and disgusting, or funny and frightening, can be so fine. Whether a joke gives pleasure or pain depends on a person's outlook.

Humour may be a luxury, but the mechanism behind it is no evolutionary accident. As Peter Derks, a psychologist at William and Mary College in Virginia, says: 'I like to think of humour as the distorted mirror of the mind. It's creative, perceptual, analytical and lingual. If we can figure out how the mind processes humour, then we'll have a pretty good handle on how it works in general.'

Practice Exercises 1.2

Complete each sentence with the correct ending, A-G, below.

Write the correct letter, A-G.

1. One of the brain's most difficult tasks is to
2. Because of the language they have developed, humans
3. Individual responses to humour
4. Peter Derks believes that humour

A. React to their own thoughts.
B. Helped create language in humans.
C. Respond instantly to whatever is happening.
D. May provide valuable information about the operation of the brain.
E. Cope with difficult situations.
F. Relate to a person's subjective views.
G. Led our ancestors to smile and then laugh.

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ANSWER KEY

EXERCISE 1.1

1. D
2. H
3. C
4. E
5. B

EXERCISE 1.2

1. C
2. A
3. F
4. D

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