IELTS Reading Strategies

TO SOLVE MATCHING HEADINGS WITH PARAGRAPHS QUESTIONS

IELTS reading paper consists of questions which require students to match a list of headings with the correct paragraph or section of a passage. Such questions usually account for 6-7 marks for 1 passage. It's very important to learn these strategies to answer such questions quickly and correctly. The passage may be divided into paragraphs or sections. Also note, sometimes matching heading questions are given before the passage on the question paper. With our tips & practise papers we are sure you're going to enjoy solving such question and get correct answers.

GUIDELINES TO SOLVE:

1. To understand the global idea of the passage you need to know the main idea of each paragraph which will help in establishing connectivity and will make question solving easier.
2. Familiarise yourself with the list of headings given in the question.
3. Skim read the entire passage to get the overall meaning.
4. Give suitable heading to the paragraphs for your-self understanding.
5. Read the first paragraph, scan through the headings and decide which heading fits the best.
6. Re-read the paragraph, choose that heading which summarises the entire paragraph.
7. Repeat steps 5 and 6 to match the remaining paragraphs with their suitable headings.

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

Passage 1.1

The Truth about the Environment

A

For many environmentalists, the world seems to be getting worse. They have developed a hit-list of our main fears: that natural resources are running out; that the population is ever growing, leaving less and less to eat; that species are becoming extinct in vast numbers, and that the planet's air and water are becoming ever more polluted.

B

But a quick look at the facts shows a different picture. First, energy and other natural resources have become more abundant, not less so, since the book 'The Limits to Growth' was published in 1972 by a group of scientists. Second, more food is now produced per head of the world's population than at any time in history. Fewer people are starving. Third, although species are indeed becoming extinct, only about 0.7% of them are expected to disappear in the next 50 years, not 25–50%, as has so often been predicted. And finally, most forms of environmental pollution either appear to have been exaggerated, or are transient – associated with the early phases of industrialisation and therefore best cured not by restricting economic growth, but by accelerating it. One form of pollution – the release of greenhouse gases that causes global warming – does appear to be a phenomenon that is going to extend well into our future, but its total impact is unlikely to pose a devastating problem. A bigger problem may well turn out to be an inappropriate response to it.

C

Yet opinion polls suggest that many people nurture the belief that environmental standards are declining and four factors seem to cause this disjunction between perception and reality.

D

One is the lopsidedness built into scientific research. Scientific funding goes mainly to areas with many problems. That may be wise policy, but it will also create an impression that many more potential problems exist than is the case.

E

Secondly, environmental groups need to be noticed by the mass media. They also need to keep the money rolling in. Understandably, perhaps, they sometimes overstate their arguments. In 1997, for example, the World Wide Fund for Nature issued a press release entitled: 'Two thirds of the world's forests lost forever'. The truth turns out to be nearer 20%.

F

Though these groups are run overwhelmingly by selfless folk, they nevertheless share many of the characteristics of other lobby groups. That would matter less if people applied the same degree of scepticism to environmental lobbying as they do to lobby groups in other fields. A trade organisation arguing for, say, weaker pollution controls is instantly seen as self-interested. Yet a green organisation opposing such a weakening is

seen as altruistic, even if an impartial view of the controls in question might suggest they are doing more harm than good.

G

A third source of confusion is the attitude of the media. People are clearly more curious about bad news than good. Newspapers and broadcasters are there to provide what the public wants. That, however, can lead to significant distortions of perception. An example was America's encounter with El Niño in 1997 and 1998. This climatic phenomenon was accused of wrecking tourism, causing allergies, melting the ski-slopes and causing 22 deaths. However, according to an article in the *Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society*, the damage it did was estimated at US$4 billion but the benefits amounted to some US$19 billion. These came from higher winter temperatures (which saved an estimated 850 lives, reduced heating costs and diminished spring floods caused by meltwaters).

H

The fourth factor is poor individual perception. People worry that the endless rise in the amount of stuff everyone throws away will cause the world to run out of places to dispose of waste. Yet, even if America's trash output continues to rise as it has done in the past, and even if the American population doubles by 2100, all the rubbish America produces through the entire 21st century will still take up only one-12,000th of the area of the entire United States.

I

So what of global warming? As we know, carbon dioxide emissions are causing the planet to warm. The best estimates are that the temperatures will rise by 2–3°C in this century, causing considerable problems, at a total cost of US$5,000 billion.

J

Despite the intuition that something drastic needs to be done about such a costly problem, economic analyses clearly show it will be far more expensive to cut carbon dioxide emissions radically than to pay the costs of adaptation to the increased temperatures. A model by one of the main authors of the United Nations Climate Change Panel shows how an expected temperature increase of 2.1 degrees in 2100 would only be diminished to an increase of 1.9 degrees. Or to put it another way, the temperature increase that the planet would have experienced in 2094 would be postponed to 2100.

K

So this does not prevent global warming, but merely buys the world six years. Yet the cost of reducing carbon dioxide emissions, for the United States alone, will be higher than the cost of solving the world's single, most pressing health problem: providing universal access to clean drinking water and sanitation. Such measures would avoid 2 million deaths every year, and prevent half a billion people from becoming seriously ill.

L

It is crucial that we look at the facts if we want to make the best possible decisions for the future. It may be costly to be overly optimistic – but more costly still to be too pessimistic.

Read headings 1-7.There are 12 paragraphs given, A-L Match the headings correctly to the paragraphs mentioned in the given passage. **The first 2 headings are matched with their respective paragraphs with explanation.**

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LIST OF HEADINGS:

1. Statistical account of temperature rise due to carbon dioxide emissions.
2. Exaggeration by the Environmental groups.

Solved Examples:

1. **Statistical account of temperature rises due to carbon dioxide emissions.**

   This heading suits perfectly for paragraph I.

   Statistical account refers to the values mentioned. Estimates are made that the temperatures would increase by 2-3 degree in this century leading to major problems that would amount for US$5,000 Billon.

2. **Exaggeration by the Environmental groups.**

   This heading best summarises paragraph E.

   The word exaggeration means amplifying something more than required. As can be rightly seen in the paragraph the environmental groups overstate their arguments and it's also proved with an example.

Practise Exercise 1.1

Read headings 1-7. Match the headings 2-8 correctly with the paragraphs mentioned in the given passage. This passage has 12 paragraphs A-L. Choose the correct heading for paragraph A and E-J from the list of headings given below. Write the correct number, 1-8 besides the paragraphs given in the questions.

LIST OF HEADINGS:

a) Statistical account of temperature rise due to carbon dioxide emissions.
b) Exaggeration by the Environmental groups.
c) Misleading the public with its newsprint items.
d) Realisation of the threats posed towards Environment.
e) Criticism faced by non-environmental groups.
f) Lack of personal insight.
g) The need to save environment.
h) Expected statistical outcome of global warming.

i. Paragraph A
ii. Paragraph F
iii. Paragraph G
iv. Paragraph H
v. Paragraph J

Practice Exercise 1.2: Solve the given passage questions in 20 minutes

THE LITTLE ICE AGE

A This book will provide a detailed examination of the Little Ice Age and other climatic shifts, but, before I embark on that, let me provide a historical context. We tend to think of climate – as opposed to weather – as something unchanging, yet humanity has been at the mercy of climate change for its entire existence, with at least eight glacial episodes in the past 730,000 years. Our ancestors adapted to the universal but irregular global warming since the end of the last great Ice Age, around 10,000 years ago, with dazzling opportunism. They developed strategies for surviving harsh drought cycles, decades of heavy rainfall or unaccustomed cold; adopted agriculture and stock-raising, which revolutionised human life; and founded the world's first pre-industrial civilisations in Egypt, Mesopotamia and the Americas. But the price of sudden climate change, in famine, disease and suffering, was often high.

B The Little Ice Age lasted from roughly 1300 until the middle of the nineteenth century. Only two centuries ago, Europe experienced a cycle of bitterly cold winters; mountain glaciers in the Swiss Alps were the lowest in recorded memory, and pack ice surrounded Iceland for much of the year. The climatic events of the Little Ice Age did more than help shape the modern world. They are the deeply important context for the current unprecedented global warming. The Little Ice Age was far from a deep freeze, however; rather an irregular seesaw of rapid climatic shifts, few lasting more than a quarter-century, driven by complex and still little understood interactions between the atmosphere and the ocean. The seesaw brought cycles of intensely cold winters and easterly winds, then switched abruptly to years of heavy spring and early summer rains, mild winters, and frequent Atlantic storms, or to periods of droughts, light northeasterly winds, and summer heat waves.

C Reconstructing the climate changes of the past is extremely difficult, because systematic weather observations began only a few centuries ago, in Europe and North America. Records from India and tropical Africa are even more recent. For the time before records began, we have only 'proxy records' reconstructed largely from tree rings and ice cores, supplemented by a few incomplete written accounts. We now have hundreds of tree-ring records from throughout the northern hemisphere, and many from south of the equator, too, amplified with a growing body of temperature data from ice cores drilled in Antarctica, Greenland, the Peruvian Andes, and other locations. We are close to a knowledge of annual summer and winter temperature variations over much of the northern hemisphere going back 600 years.

D This book is a narrative history of climatic shifts during the past ten centuries, and some of the ways in which people in Europe adapted to them. Part One describes the Medieval Warm Period, roughly 900 to 1200. During these three centuries, Norse voyagers from Northern Europe explored northern seas, settled Greenland, and visited North America. It was not a time of uniform warmth, for then, as always since the Great Ice Age, there were constant shifts in rainfall and temperature. Mean European temperatures were about the same as today, perhaps slightly cooler.

E It is known that the Little Ice Age cooling began in Greenland and the Arctic in about 1200. As the Arctic ice pack spread southward, Norse voyages to the west were rerouted into the open Atlantic, then ended altogether. Storminess increased in the North Atlantic and North Sea. Colder, much wetter weather descended on Europe between 1315 and 1319, when thousands perished in a continent-wide famine. By 1400, the weather had become decidedly more unpredictable and stormier, with sudden shifts and lower temperatures that culminated in the cold decades of the late sixteenth century. Fish were a vital commodity in growing towns and cities, where food supplies were a constant concern. Dried cod and herring were already the staples of the European fish trade, but changes in water temperatures forced fishing fleets to work further offshore. The Basques, Dutch, and English developed the first offshore fishing boats adapted to a colder and stormier Atlantic. A gradual agricultural revolution in northern Europe stemmed from concerns over food supplies at a time of rising populations. The revolution involved intensive commercial farming and the growing of animal fodder on land not previously used for crops. The increased productivity from farmland made some countries self-sufficient in grain and livestock and offered effective protection against famine.

F Global temperatures began to rise slowly after 1850, with the beginning of the Modern Warm Period. There was a vast migration from Europe by land-hungry farmers and others, to which the famine caused by the Irish potato blight contributed, to North America, Australia, New Zealand, and southern Africa. Millions of hectares of forest and woodland fell before the newcomers' axes between 1850 and 1890, as intensive European farming methods expanded across the world. The unprecedented land clearance released vast quantities of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, triggering for the first time humanly caused global warming. Temperatures climbed more rapidly in the twentieth century as the use of fossil fuels proliferated and greenhouse gas levels continued to soar. The rise has been even steeper since the early 1980s. The Little Ice Age has given way to a new climatic regime, marked by prolonged and steady warming. At the same time, extreme weather events like Category 5 hurricanes are becoming more frequent.

Practise Exercise 1.2:

Read headings 1-7. Match the headings correctly to the paragraphs mentioned in the given passage. This passage has six paragraphs A-F. Choose the correct heading for paragraph A-F from the list of headings given below. Write the correct number, 1-9 besides the paragraphs given in the questions.

LIST OF HEADINGS

a) Predicting climatic changes.
b) The relevance of the Little Ice Age today.
c) How cities contribute to climate change.
d) Human impact on climate
e) How past climatic conditions can be determined
f) A growing need for weather records
g) A study covering a thousand years.
h) People have always responded to climatic change.
i) Enough food at last.

i. Paragraph A
ii. Paragraph B
iii. Paragraph C
iv. Paragraph D
v. Paragraph E
vi. Paragraph F

IELTS Reading Strategies

ANSWER KEY

EXERCISE 1.1

i. i
ii. e
iii. c
iv. f
v. h

EXERCISE 1.2

i. h
ii. b
iii. c
iv. g
v. i
vi. d

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