

IELTS Reading Skills You Can Practice Everyday

<http://theieltscoach.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/IELTS-Reading-Skills-Video.m4a>

A lot of students focus too much on specific IELTS tasks and become very stressed with only being concerned about the exam. You can practice and improve your IELTS reading skills everyday by doing non IELTS specific reading.

All of the IELTS reading skills I will talk about can be practiced and improved while doing any type of reading. Try doing these things when you read a novel, newspaper article, blog post or any kind of reading.

QUICK TIP:

If you are having trouble understanding some of the vocabulary in this article, ask for help in the comments section. Read all comments first because the word you ask about may have already been defined and explained.

Skimming And Scanning

These 2 skills are vital in the IELTS reading exam. Skimming means reading a text quickly, for only 1 or 2 minutes, to get a general idea what the text or paragraph is about. The idea is to notice headings, topic sentences and key words so you can figure out the topic and context of the reading passage.

Scanning means looking for specific words in a text. For example, it is usually quite easy to scan for dates, names, numbers and places. If we know the answer to a question is a person's name, we don't need to read the entire text in detail, we just need to scan for names (with capital letters) and make sure the name matches the question.

Next time you read an article or blog post spend 2 minutes reading from start to finish just to get the general idea. Then spend a few minutes scanning for any names and numbers mentioned in the text. What do those names and numbers represent? Being able to do this quickly and often will really help your IELTS reading skills when it comes to the exam.

Improving Your Reading Speed

Every time you read you have an opportunity to practice increasing the speed at which you read. This is one of the IELTS reading skills that students think is difficult but is actually quite easy to improve.

Get into the habit of timing yourself when you read. Set a time limit when you read and then read the text as many times as possible in that time limit. The idea is to skim the text as many times as possible in the time limit. Don't read the information once, read it three or four times if you can.

In my classes I start by giving students 5 minutes to read a text and 5 minutes to answer some questions about the text. Each lesson I reduce the time by 30 seconds. By the time students only have 2 minutes to read and 2 minutes to answer the questions their accuracy is still the same for when they had 10 minutes to read and answer.

This activity trains you to read faster and focus on what is important in the text. Over time your brain gets faster at reading. This then gives you more time in the IELTS exam to go back and spend time on the difficult questions.

QUICK TIP:

Finding reading material that is suitable for IELTS candidates is quite easy. Wikipedia is a great resource and has academic texts on a wide range of topics. You could also do Google searches for academic or scientific topics.

Summarising A Text

In my classes I have seen so many students spend 5 to 10 minutes reading a text but when I ask them what it is about they can't respond very well without looking at the text. You should be able to remember some of what you read and then summarise that information.

You can start by just reading 1 paragraph then summarising that information. Can you express the information in 1 sentence? What was the topic of the paragraph? Were any people mentioned? A good summary of an IELTS text only needs to be 3 or 4 sentences, you don't need to repeat the entire article or include every detail.

You should practice summarising both verbally and in writing. Read an article then tell your friend about it. Read an IELTS text then spend a few minutes writing a four sentence summary. As always don't forget to check your spelling and grammar.

Summarising is a one of the more important IELTS reading skills because summary completion is one of the activities in the IELTS reading exam. Having your own summary when reading a text will make it easier for you to complete the summaries presented in the exam.

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