IELTS Mock Test 2024 April

Reading Practice Test 2

HOW TO USE

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READING PASSAGE 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on ***Questions 1-14****, which are based on Reading Passage 1 below.*

Inside the mind of a fan: How watching sport affects the brain

A

At about the same time that the poet Homer invented the epic here, the ancient Greeks started a festival in which men competed in a single race, about 200 metres long. The winner received a branch of wild olives. The Greeks called this celebration the Olympics. Through the ancient sprint remains, today the Olympics are far more than that. Indeed, the Games seem to celebrate the dream of progress as embodied in the human form. That the Games are intoxicating to watch is beyond question. During the Athens Olympics in 2004, 3.4 billion people, half the world, watched them on television. Certainly, being a spectator is a thrilling experience: but why?

B

In 1996, three Italian neuroscientists, Giacomo Rizzolatti, Leonardo Forgassi and Vittorio Gallese, examined the premotor cortex of monkeys. The discovered that inside these primate brains there were groups of cells that 'store vocabularies of motor actions'. Just as there are grammars of movement. These networks of cells are the bodily 'sentences' we use every day, the ones our brain has chosen to retain and refine. Think, for example, about a golf swing. To those who have only watched the Master's Tournament on TV, golfing seems easy. To the novice, however, the skill of casting a smooth arc with a lop-side metal stick is virtually impossible. This is because most novices swing with their consciousness, using an area of brain next to the premotor cortex. To the expert, on the other hand, a perfectly balanced stroke is second nature. For him, the motor action has become memorized, and the movements are embedded in the neurons of his premotor cortex. He hits the ball with the tranquility of his perfected autopilot.

C

These neurons in the premotor cortex, besides explaining why certain athletes seem to possess almost unbelievable levels of skill, have an even more amazing characteristic, one that caused Rizzolatti, Fogassi and Gallese to give them the lofty title 'mirror neurons'. They note, The main functional characteristic of mirror neurons is that they become active both when the monkey performs a particular action (for example, grasping an object or holding it) and, astonishingly, when it sees another individual performing a similar action.' Humans have an even more elaborate mirror neuron system. These peculiar cells mirror, inside the brain, the outside world:

they enable us to internalize the actions of another. In order to be activated, though, these cells require what the scientists call ‘goal-orientated movements’. If we are staring at a photograph, a fixed image of a runner mid-stride, our mirror neurons are totally silent. They only fire when the runner is active: running, moving or sprinting.

D

What these electrophysiological studies indicate is that when we watch a golfer or a runner in action, the mirror neurons in our own premotor cortex light up as if we were the ones competing. This phenomenon of neural mirror was first discovered in 1954, when two French physiologists, Gastaut and Berf, found that the brains of humans vibrate with two distinct wavelengths, alpha and mu. The mu system is involved in neural mirroring. It is active when your bodies are still, and disappears whenever we do something active, like playing a sport or changing the TV channel. The surprising fact is that the mu signal is also quiet when we watch someone else being active, as on TV, these results are the effect of mirror neurons.

E

Rizzolatti, Fogassi and Gallese call the idea for mirror neurons the ‘direct matching hypothesis’. They believe that we only understand the movement of sports stars when we ‘map the visual representation of the observed action onto our motor representation of the same action’. According to this theory, watching an Olympic athlete ‘causes the motor system of the observer to resonate. The “motor knowledge” of the observer is used to understand the observed action.’ But mirror neurons are more than just the neural basis for our attitude to sport. It turns out that watching a great golfer makes us better golfers, and watching a great sprinter actually makes us run faster. This ability to learn by watching is a crucial skill. From the acquisition of language as infants to learning facial expressions, mimesis (copying) is an essential part of being conscious. The best athletes are those with a premotor cortex capable of imagining the movements of victory, together with the physical properties to make those movements real.

F

But how many of us regularly watch sports in order to be a better athlete? Rather, we watch sport for the feeling, the human drama. This feeling also derives from mirror neurons. By letting spectators share in the motions of victory, they also allow us to share in its feelings. This is because they are directly connected to the amygdale, one of the main brain regions involved in emotion. During the Olympics, the mirror neurons of whole nations will be electrically identical, their athletes causing spectators to feel, just for a second or two, the same thing. Watching sports brings people together. Most of us will never run a mile in under four minutes, or hit a home run. Our consolation comes in watching, when we gather around the TV, we all feel, just for a moment, what it is to do something perfectly.

Questions 1-6

Reading Passage has six paragraphs, **A-F**.

Which paragraph contains the following information?

Write the correct letter, **A-F**, in boxes **1-6** on your answer sheet.

NB You may use any letter more than once.

1 [ ] An explanation of why watching sport may be emotionally satisfying

2 [ ] An explanation of why beginners find sporting tasks difficult

3 [ ] A factor that needs to combine with mirroring to attain sporting excellence

4 [ ] A comparison of human and animal mirror neurons

5 [ ] The first discovery of brain activity related to mirror neurons

6 [ ] A claim linking observation to improvement in performance

Questions 7-9

Choose the correct letter, A, B, C or D.

Write your answers in boxes **7-9** on your answer sheet.

7 The writer uses the term 'grammar of movement' to mean

- A ○ a level of sporting skill.
- B ○ a system of words about movement.
- C ○ a pattern of connected cells.
- D ○ a type of golf swing.

8 The writer states that expert players perform their actions

- A ○ without conscious thought.
- B ○ by planning each phase of movement.
- C ○ without regular practice.
- D ○ by thinking about the actions of others.

9 The writer states that the most common motive for watching sport is to

A improve personal performance.

B feel linked with people of different nationalities.

C experience strong positive emotions.

D realize what skill consists of.

Questions 10-14

Do the following statements agree with the views of the writer in Reading Passage?

In boxes **10-14** on your answer sheet, write

YES	if the statement agrees with the views of the writer
NO	if the statement contradicts the views of the writer
NOT GIVEN	if it is impossible to say what the writer thinks about this

10 [ ] Inexpert sports players are too aware of what they are doing.

11 [ ] Monkeys have a more complex mirror neuron system than humans.

12 [ ] Looking at a photograph can activate mirror neurons.

13 [ ] Gastaut and Bert were both researchers and sports players.

14 [ ] The mu system is at rest when we are engaged in an activity.

READING PASSAGE 2

You should spend about 20 minutes on ***Questions 15-27****, which are based on Reading Passage 1 below.*

The history of the British wool industry

Wood is part of Britain's history and heritage, more so than any other commodity ever produced in that county. It was made into cloth there in the Bronze Age, which began about 1900 BC. By the time the Romans invaded in 55 BC the Britons had developed an appreciation for the fineness of British woolen cloth. Although Saxon invasions in the fifth century nearly destroyed the industry, it is known that in the eighth century Britain was exporting woolen fabrics to continental Europe, and after the arrival of the Norman conquerors in 1066 the industry expanded. By the twelfth century, wool was becoming England's greatest national asset. Cloth making was widespread, particularly in the large towns of southern and eastern England, nearest to France. But the greatest wealth came from exports of raw wool.

Kings and their ministers welcomed the revenue that resulted from exports and export taxes - and also the power it gave to the king, who could grant or withdraw permits for the wool towns and for the industry. Trade associations, known as 'guilds', were founded to guarantee good work by experienced weavers (people who produce cloth from woolen threads), and were powerful for hundreds of years. The peak of cloth production was reached in the thirteenth century. Then the wool trade declined for a long period because of political conflict.

In 1331, King Edward III encouraged master weavers from Flanders (an area of present-day Belgium) to settle in England. These Flemish weavers and their descendants were to play a part in the final development of English cloth. The export trade in raw wool recovered and the first half of the fourteenth century was a time of prosperity for English wool farmers. But it was overshadowed by a long war with France (export taxes on wool were one of the principal means of financing the war) and by bubonic plague (the Black Death), which in 1349 caused devastation: in many villages as much as three-quarters of the population died. This led to an increase of the sheep flocks, for there were not enough people left to cultivate the land for arable crops.

Despite setbacks, raw wool exporting expanded, and so also did manufacturing of wool fabrics. This was becoming both specialized and localized. The area of England known as the West Country had three advantages - extensive sheep pastures, a supply of soft water for washing, scouring and dyeing wool, and water-power to drive machinery. Similarly, the hills of Yorkshire and Lancashire in the north of England had soft water and fast running streams. Water from the latter could be used to drive mills for 'fulling', a shrinking process which makes the fabric firmer and its surface more compact.

In East Anglia there was soft water, but no hills or fast-running streams to provide power for fulling mills. Instead, East Anglia used the long, fine wool from its native sheep breeds to produce a cloth which did not require the fulling process. This was the type of cloth which is now called ‘worsted’, after the village of Worstead. For four hundred years East Anglia dominated the worst trade, with skills inherited from the Flemish settlers of 1331.

English cloth quickly achieved an international reputation. From being primarily a raw wool exporter, the county became in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries a manufacturer and exporter of cloth. At the end of the fifteenth century, it was said that England was largely a nation of sheep farmers and cloth manufacturers. The next two centuries saw continued expansion of the industry despite conflicts at home and abroad. In the sixteenth century, French weavers, persecuted for their Protestant religion, sought refuge in England and took their skills with them. England began to surpass Flanders in woolen manufacture: by the end of the seventeenth century it comprised two-thirds of the value of its exports. Radical changes lay ahead, in the geographical location of the industry, in labor use and in manufacturing processes. By 1770, output of worsted from Yorkshire equalled that of East Anglia, and its cloth manufacturing district began to take shape with the expansion of major towns: Leeds, Bradford, Halifax, Huddersfield and Wakefield.

The Industrial Revolution of 1750-1850 also brought charge. It led the way for new inventions stemming from the Lancashire cotton industry, to mechanize and speed dramatically the processes of spinning and weaving. Manufacturing methods, unchanged since the revival of the trade in the fourteenth century, were now superseded. Mechanization had been opposed in the past and it was again. The widespread unrest of 1812 led to the destruction of equipment by bands of rioters, who feared they would lose employment. But machinery won the day.

Over the course of the nineteenth century, the older in areas such as East Anglia, where opposition had been most bitter, permanently declined. They were overtaken by Yorkshire, where machinery was more readily accepted. The younger industry jumped ahead and never lost its lead, supported by abundant supplies of inexpensive coal to generate steam and, later, electrical power. Other specialized types of manufacturing developed in Scotland, famed for its tweeds (a range of coloured woolen cloth with characteristic designs), and in the West Country, which focused on the production of high-quality, wooden carpets.

Questions 15-19

Do the following statements agree with the information given in Reading Passage 1? In boxes **15-19** on your answer sheet, write

TRUE	if the statement agrees with the information
FALSE	if the statement contradicts the information
NOT GIVEN	If there is no information on this

15 [ ] The process of making cloth from wool was introduced to Britain by the Román

16 [ ] In the twelfth century, exporting woolen cloth was less profitable than exporting raw wool.

17 [ ] Rulers had a financial interest in the success of the wool industry.

18 [ ] An outbreak of bubonic plague led to a sharp fall in sheep numbers.

19 [ ] Worsted cloth was cheaper to produce than other types of woolen fabric.

Questions 20-27

Complete the notes below.

Choose **ONE WORD ONLY** from the passage for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes **20-27** on your answer sheet.

Woolen cloth manufacture

Growing importance of the cloth industry

16th century	skilled 20 _____ emigrated to England
end 17th century	majority of English 21 _____ were wool products
18th century	production of worsted cloth increased in Yorkshire - growth of five key manufacturing 22 _____
1750-1850	new machinery was developed - initially for the production of 23 _____

1812	• protests resulted in the 24 _____ of machinery in Yorkshire mechanization increased, aided by the availability of cheap 25 _____
19th century	Growth of specialization: Scotland - specialized in 26 _____ West Country - specialized in 27 _____

READING PASSAGE 3

You should spend about 20 minutes on ***Questions 28-40****, which are based on Reading Passage 1 below.*

Flying the Coast

The development of an air service on the west coast of New Zealand's South Island

Cut off from the rest of the country by a range of mountains, the west coast of New Zealand's South Island - or the "Coast" as it is commonly known - was the country's "wild west frontier". But unlike Fiordland to the south, which was and still is an uninhabitable wilderness, the Coast in the 1930s was not only habitable, it was also potentially rich. Settlers hunted and fished, logged, milled and mined. They farmed where they managed to clear the forest and drain the swamps. It was pure survival at times. The isolation was inescapable, not so much because of the great distances that travelers had to cover, but rather due to the topography of the place - the mountains, gorges, glaciers, rivers and headlands - which necessitated long detours and careful timing with regard to weather and tides. Bridges were few and far between in the early years, and even ferry crossings were often impossible after heavy rains. Each river had its attendant ferryman or woman whose attention a traveler would attract with a rifle shot. It was the kind of country where one would greatly benefit from a pair of wings.

Maurice Buckley, a World War I pilot, was the first to give Coasters, as the residents of the region were called, such wings, by establishing the Arrow Aviation Company in 1923. That year he bought an Avro biplane on the east coast, which he transported across the country by rail, wings off, before reassembling it in a local garage. When he opened for business the following year, the colorful Avro was an instant crowd-pleaser and Coasters queued up for joyrides. For the first major flight, Buckley invited Dr Teichelmann, a local mountaineer, to join him. They flew over the Franz Josef Glacier and landed at Okarito. Afterwards, Teichelmann wrote about how extraordinary it was to look at the world from the air," like taking the roof off the house and watching the performances from above.

Next came an aviator named Bert Mercer, who made a reconnaissance flight to the Coast in August 1933 and started Air Travel (NZ) the following year, Mercer's aircraft of choice was a DH83 Fox Moth. By comparison with the regular open-air aircraft of the day, the Fox Moth was a plane that offered considerable luxury, housing four passengers in an enclosed forward area fully protected from the weather. Mercer opened for business in December 1934, picking up the airline's first passengers and, on the last day of that year, commenced a regular delivery of mail, carrying 73 kg of letters to Haast and Okuru. From that day on, the Fox Moth became a much-anticipated sight on the coast.

Mercer got on with everyone and won their respect by anticipating, then meeting their needs. One of those was setting up the first aerial shipping route to help transport a kind of small fish known as whitebait. Starting in 1935 Mercer would put the plane down where there was no airstrip, instead using remote beaches such as the one at the mouth of the Paringa River, collect the whitebait and whisk them off to the night train and waiting city markets in perfectly fresh condition, Mercer relied on his senses -what he could see and hear - to navigate, flying around the weather and contours of the land. Although often warned to do so by aviation authorities, he refused to develop the skills necessary to navigate the plane "blind, using just its instruments on the console in front of him. The old habits were too hard to change.

With the outbreak of World war II, mercer's aircraft were considered so essential to the remote Coast that they were not militarized. In fact, the business continued to grow in the early years, thanks in large part to a government issued subsidy, which allowed him to expand into neighboring areas. Despite the war in far-off lands, life on the Coast was business as usual. The settlers were always in need of mail and transportation. In time, though, this presented Mercer with a pressing issue: with so many now joining the Air Force, he no longer had enough pilots. In 1942 he wrote in his diary, I am back to where I started eight years ago- on my own.

The only solution to keep the airline going was to pack as much into every plane as possible and make every flight count. But some of mercer's newly formed team objected to the amount of cargo they had to carry, which for a small rural airline was a fact of life. One man, Norm Suttle, left the airline after a few months in protest about carrying more than was appropriate for the aircraft. This marked another decline in the airline's fortunes, When Bert Mercer died in 1944, the airline was taken over by Fred Lucas, a man who shared mercer's pioneering spirit. Under Lucas s leadership the newly formed West Coast Airways saw Another decade of profitable returns. But in the following decade, times changed fast. Helicopters were soon found to be ideal machines for the Coast terrain, and quickly took over the vast majority of the local air transport business.

Questions 28-33

Do the following statements agree with the information given in Reading Passage 1?

In boxes **28-33** on your answer sheet write

TRUE	if the statement agrees with the information
FALSE	if the statement contradicts the information
NOT GIVEN	If there is no information on this

28 [ ] In the 1930s, the Coast and Fiordland had populations of a

similar size.

29 [ ] Most settlers on the Coast were migrants from overseas

30 [ ] The coast's geographical features made moving around the region difficult

31 [ ] The first bridges to be built on the Coast were swept away by floods

32 [ ] Maurice Buckley flew his Avro biplane to the Coast in 1923

33 [ ] Coasters were unwilling to fly at first

Questions 34-40

Complete the notes below.

Choose **ONE WORD ONLY** from the passage for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes **34-40** on your answer sheet.

Bert Mercer and aviation on the Coast

Early Years

Mercer set up Air Travel (NZ) in 1934.
The Fox Moth was noted for its 34 _____ compared to other planes
in 1934 mercer's company started to transport 35 _____ and passengers
from 1935 planes landed on 36 _____ to pick up fresh produce.

World War II

the airline expanded at first because it got a 37 _____ from the state
there was a shortage of 38 _____ by 1942.

Final Years

there were disputes at the airline about the quantity of 39 _____ in.... each plane
1950s: 40 _____ became popular and the airline suffered.

Solution:

Part 1: Question 1 - 14

1. F
2. B
3. E
4. C
5. D
6. E
7. C
8. A
9. C
10. YES
11. NO
12. NO
13. NOT GIVEN
14. YES

Part 2: Question 15 - 27

15. FALSE
16. TRUE
17. TRUE
18. FALSE
19. NOT GIVEN
20. weavers
21. <span style="font-

family:Arial,sans-serif">exports

22 towns

23 cotton

24 destruction

25 coal

26 tweeds

27 carpets

Part 3: Question 28 - 40

28 FALSE

29 NOT GIVEN

30 TRUE

31 NOT GIVEN

32 FALSE

33 FALSE

34 luxury

35 mail

36 beaches

37 subsidy

38 pilots

39 cargo

40 helicopters