



IELTS Mock Test 2021 January Reading Practice Test 2

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Reading Passage 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on Questions 1-13, which are based on Reading Passage One.



It's Only a Cockroach

I turn on the light in my kitchen that night, and then I see it. I draw back, and my first instinct is to scream. I control myself with difficulty, but find myself shuddering, unable to deal with the creature before me. It's only a cockroach, but its large size, long antennae, shiny appearance, and spiny legs, all present a particularly disgusting appearance. And this is not just to me, but to everyone it seems, even to the point of phobic responses.

This is certainly the over-riding reason I want these creatures totally eradicated from my apartment, but with their offensive odour, passive transportation of microbes, and trails of droppings, they also pose a distinct threat to domestic hygiene. Clearly, cohabitation is not possible. So, I do all I can to keep these pests away. Food is stored in sealed containers, garbage cans have tight lids, my kitchen is kept spotlessly clean, and my apartment swept and mopped nightly. I have also sealed up possible entry points, but still, these loathsome things find their way inside. I need a way to kill them.

The most precise cockroach killer is, typically, another insect. A specific species of wasp targets these creatures. With a quick accurate swoop, it bites the cockroach at the main nerve centre of its body, which results in a temporary paralysis. This is very necessary, as we all know just how fast cockroaches can run. The wasp has only a few minutes to prepare its next sting, in the exact area of the brain which controls the cockroaches' instinct to escape. After the paralysis departs, the cockroach is subdued and docile, and doomed. The wasp bites off the antennae to further discourage flight, then drags its victim away.

Faced with such predation, cockroaches usually conceal themselves during the day, and with their ability to flatten their bodies, they can disappear into just about any tiny nook, crevice, and cranny. There, they wait patiently for darkness before emerging to search for food, and will usually run away when exposed to light. Given this, I am told that the slim and agile house

centipede is probably the most effective cockroach predator, able to track down and root out the most carefully hidden prey. Unfortunately, I would say that centipedes are even more disgusting to have in one's house, if that's possible. I just can't win this game.

Can anyone win? These insects are just about the hardiest, on the planet. Some can wait for up to three months before meals, some can survive on the barest hint of nutrition (such as the glue on the back of postage stamps), and some can live without air for over half an hour. They do not, however, handle cold weather well, preferring the warm conditions and security found within buildings.

Hidden there, the female lays egg capsules containing around 40 eggs, and with the insect's relatively long lifespan (about a year), some 300 to 400 offspring can ultimately be produced. The result: once these insects have infested a building, they are very difficult to eradicate.

Cockroaches do, however, have some subtleties. They leave chemical messages in their droppings, as well as emit airborne pheromones to signal other cockroaches about sources of food and water, and alert them to their own presence. The latter is more important, for these insects are actually somewhat gregarious. Research has shown that cockroaches make group-based decisions, and tend to co-operate. One study placed a large number of cockroaches in a dish with three small shelters, and the insects divided themselves equally between two of them, leaving the third one empty. When these shelters were exchanged for two very large ones, all the cockroaches arranged themselves in just one. These creatures, it seems, prefer the company of others, and a rather fair allocation of resources.

Should I therefore feel any admiration? It is hard - in fact, in Western culture, cockroaches are almost universally depicted as repulsive and dirty pests. In the insect's most famous literary appearance - Franz Kafka's 'The Metamorphosis' - a man, Gregor, is transformed overnight into a monstrous insect, probably a cockroach (although the story never quite makes that clear). Gregor's transformation results in very predictable responses from his family and friends, who can never accept him again. He eventually dies, outcast and lonely, despised and mistreated - a potent symbol of alienation and rejection. Yet in the Pixar animated feature 'Wall-E', a cockroach provides essential companionship to a lone robot living on a planet scorched by a nuclear holocaust.

Whatever the case, I am faced with a big problem: a large ugly cockroach crawling slowly across my sink, antennae waving as it explores around. If I try to grab it, it will dart away, and I doubt whether I'll be able to catch it before it disappears into the numerous cracks and crevices of my old apartment. So, I carefully remove my slipper, determined to squash the insect, but then almost scream again as it lifts on its legs, raises membranous wings, and with a loud buzzing noise, flies away. Oh, just what I need they can fly, too.

Questions 1-4

Answer the questions.

Choose **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** from the passage for each answer

What aspect of cockroaches makes the author want them removed from the home?

1 _____

What human aspect do they endanger?

2 _____

Which insect is the best cockroach killer?

3 _____

What can cockroaches do to easily hide?

4 _____

Questions 5-8

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

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

5 The author finds cockroaches more repulsive than centipedes.

6 Cockroaches live longer than many other insects.

7 Cockroaches will fight over food.

8 Cockroaches are often the subject of research.

Questions 9-11

Complete the summary of the second half of the passage.

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

Cockroaches use 9 _____ in the air to communicate, and show a willingness to 10 _____, yet the author struggles to feel 11 _____ for these insects.

Questions 12-13

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

12 Gregor

- A becomes a cockroach.
- B is a famous character.
- C despises his friends.
- D needs companionship.

13 The author wants to

- A catch the cockroach.
- B kill the cockroach.
- C touch the cockroach.
- D fly like a cockroach.

Reading Passage 2

You should spend about 20 minutes on Questions 14-26, which are based on Reading Passage Two.



Such a Fascinating Game

It is one of the world's most popular games, played by millions of people at home, in clubs, online, by correspondence, and in tournaments. It is chess, a humble arrangement where two players stare at a checkered board with 64 squares arranged in an eight-by-eight grid, eyeing their 16 pieces each as the first move is played. When the opponent's king is checkmated, the game is over, but between the beginning and the end, a wealth of elegant, complicated, and fascinating moves and combinations can unfold.

The origins of chess lie in Northwest India, around the 6th century. At that time there existed a game known as caturanga, which means 'four division', those divisions being of the military, represented by the infantry, cavalry, elephants, and chariotry. These pieces were eventually to become the pawn, knight, bishop, and rook, respectively, in the modern descendant of the game. Around 600 AD, caturanga spread to Persia, then, after the Muslim conquest of that region (beginning around that time), the game gained ground throughout the Islamic world, from where it eventually spread to Europe.

Around 1200 AD, Southern Europe began modifying the rules, and within 300 years the game had become recognisably the one we play today. The queen had long replaced the earlier vizier to become the most powerful piece, while the pawns were given the option of advancing two squares on the first move in order to accelerate play. These new rules quickly spread across Western Europe, creating the game now known as 'western chess' or 'international chess', to distinguish it from older or regional variants of the game.

As for the players themselves, one world think that the best of them are necessarily smart, with extremely high IQs; however, research has not been able to confirm this link. Some studies have shown that good chess players may have strong IQs, but there appears to be no direct correlation between this and chess ability. Paradoxically, the academically brilliant may even be

less able at chess, and vice versa. Evidently, there are other factors involved, such as spacio-visual insight and subliminal memory, not necessarily picked up by conventional intelligence tests, readily noticeable, or even useful in real life.

But there are non-mental factors which clearly play a role. No one can doubt that raw talent is necessary, but even the best and brightest must systematically undergo at least 10 to 15 years of theoretical study and competitive practice before reaching world championship levels. The American chess genius, Bobby Fischer, was only 13 when he produced the 'Game of the Century', but he was not world champion until he was 29. The Russian chess player, Garry Kasparov, was the youngest world champion ever, at 22, but he began dedicated state-sponsored training from the age of ten onwards, complete with personal chess coaches.

All this shows the fixed place chess has in western culture, meaning also that this region has, historically, produced all the greatest players. However, interest in chess is now growing in the East, although there is one problem being the stiff competition it faces with local board games, such as Xiangqi and Go. These are more popular by a wide margin, but regarding China for example, with its huge population and state-sponsored training, it is fast becoming a major chess power. The reigning women's world chess champion is Chinese, and the country performs well in chess Olympiads. The future for the game in this country looks bright indeed.

Talking about the future inevitably leads to the subject of computer chess. Serious chess-playing machines began to emerge in the 1970s and 1980s, but their abilities were far below that of the top human players. Progress, although slow, was steady, and with increasing memory and faster processing, it was inevitable that one day a computer would be able to match humans. Yet this is merely by brutally going through all the possible moves, millions per second, deeper and deeper into the position. The final move-choices give the appearance of intuition and long-term strategy, when in actual fact they are simply based on an unthinking and directionless material count.

In 1989, the computer 'Deep Thought' scored some wins against top human players, although the world champion at that time, Garry Kasparov, easily defeated the machine in some arranged games. In 1996, however, IBM brought out the next generation computer, 'Deep Blue', Pitting it in a match with this same player. Although it managed to score the first win against a reigning world champion, by losing three and drawing two of the remaining games, it lost the match. However, a return match the following year saw Kasparov facing an even better machine, 'Deeper Blue'. This time, the computer triumphed 3 1/2 - 2 1/2. And they are only getting better.

As impressive as these results seem, most people agree that it is similar to a forklift beating a weightlifter - somehow not a valid contest, and of little significance. Yes, computers can win games, but creativity and intelligence are still the province of human players. It is these factors, as well as the tense psychological struggle of minds and the personalities involved, together with the limitless artistry of the positions themselves, which will always make chess such a

fascinating game

Questions 14-16

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

14 There are 32 pieces at the beginning of a chess game.

15 Caturanga was more complicated than modern chess.

16 The popularity of caturanga increased after the Muslims took control.

Questions 17-19

Answer the questions.

Choose **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** from the passage for each answer.

Which piece replaced the elephant?

17 _____

Why were pawns given an extra ability?

18 _____

Who was the youngest world champion?

19 _____

Questions 20-24

Give **TWO** examples of the following categories.

Choose **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** from the passage for each example.

Categories	An Example	Another Example
Mental abilities which great chess players must have	spacio-visual insight	20 <input type="text"/>

requirements, apart from talent, which create great chess players	21 <input type="text"/>	competitive practice
reasons accounting for China's chess success	22 <input type="text"/>	state-sponsored training
factors which enable computers to equal human chess players	increasing memory	23 <input type="text"/>
assets which human players have, that computers do not	creativity	24 <input type="text"/>

Questions 25-26

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

25 Deep Blue

- A was stronger than Deeper Blue.
- B was stronger than Deep Thought.
- C won several games against Kasparov.
- D eventually triumphed over Kasparov.

26 Computers

- A have significant creativity.
- B provide tense psychological struggles.
- C are comparable to forklifts.
- D analyse billions of positions per second.

Reading Passage 3

You should spend about 20 minutes on Questions 27-40, which are based on Reading Passage Three.



What's in Blood?

A.

Blood is the most specialised fluid within living animals, playing an absolutely critical role. It symbolises life ('new blood'), health ('get your blood running'), personality ('good or bad blood'), and family ('your bloodline'). This red fluid itself is something which most people would rather not see, yet it contains such a complex soup of proteins, sugars, ions, hormones, gases, and basic cellular components that it is certainly worth considering in some detail.

B.

By volume, half of blood is the liquid part, called plasma. The rest comprises specialised components, the main one being red blood cells (technically known as erythrocytes). These transport oxygen molecules throughout the body, and also give blood its colour (from the hemoglobin protein within, which turns red when combined with oxygen). Red blood cells, as with all cells in the human body, have a limited operating life. They are produced within the marrow of bones, principally the larger ones, and live for about four months before they fall inactive, to be then reabsorbed by the spleen and liver, with waste products absorbed into the urine.

C.

This contrasts with the other main cells of human blood: the white blood cells, technically known as leukocytes. Similarly produced in the bone marrow, they are active only for three or four days, yet they are essential in defending the body against infections. White blood cells come in many different types, each designed to deal with a different sort of invader bacteria, virus, fungus, or parasite. When one of these enters the body, the white blood cells quickly determine its nature, then, after mustering sufficient numbers of a specific type (the period in which you are sick), they launch themselves into the fight, enveloping each individual invasive

cell, and breaking it down (leading to recovery).

D.

That leaves the last main component of blood: platelets. Their technical name is thrombocytes, and they are much smaller than red and white blood cells. Also circulating freely, they are responsible for clotting the blood, and this is necessary to heal both external and internal injuries. Again, they are produced in the bone marrow, and have the interesting ability to change shape. There are several diseases related to the breakdown in the regulation of their numbers. If too low, excessive bleeding can occur, yet if too high, internal clotting may result, causing potentially catastrophic blockages in parts of the body and medical ailments we know as strokes, heart attacks, and embolisms.

E.

Blood's complexity presents particular difficulties in the advent of emergency transfusions. These are avoided whenever possible in order to lower the risk of reactions due to blood incompatibility. Unexpected antigens can trigger antibodies to attack blood components, with potentially lethal results. Thus, if transfusions are to take place, a thorough knowledge and classification of blood is essential, yet with 30 recognised blood-group systems, containing hundreds of antigens, this presents quite a challenge. The ABO system is the most important. On top of this is the Rhesus factor, which is not as simple as positive or negative (as most people think), but comprises scores of antigens. These can, however, be clustered together into groups which cause similar responses, creating some order.

F.

Of course, the simplest system to avoid adverse transfusion reactions is for patients to receive their own blood - for example, in a series of blood donations in anticipation of an operation scheduled some months in advance. The second best system is to undertake cross-matching, which involves simply mixing samples of the patients' blood with the donors', then checking microscopically for clumping - a key sign of incompatibility. Both of these systems are obviously impractical in an emergency situation, which is why meticulous testing, documentation, and labeling of blood are necessary.

G.

In a true emergency, a blood bank is needed, with an array of various types of blood on hand. Hence, blood donations must be a regular occurrence among a significant segment of the population. In the developed world, unpaid volunteers provide most of the blood for the community, whereas in less developed nations, families or friends are mostly involved. In the era of HIV and other insidious blood-borne diseases, potential donors are carefully screened and tested, and a period of about two months is recommended before successive whole blood donations.

H.

Given the vital role which blood plays, it is strange to think that for almost 2000 years bloodletting was a widespread medical practice. It was based on the belief that blood carried 'humours', whose imbalances resulted in medical illnesses. Bleeding a patient was supposed to remove an undesirable excess of one of these. Furthermore, the fact that blood circulated around the body was unknown. It was instead assumed to be quickly created, and equally quickly exhausted of its value, after which it could stagnate unhealthily in the bodily extremities. Although the logic was there, it goes without saying that very few patients responded positively to such treatment.

Questions 27-33

Reading Passage Three has eight paragraphs, A-H.

Choose the correct heading for Paragraphs B-H from the list of headings.

Write the correct number, i-x, for each answer.

List of headings	
i	Not as big, but needing just enough
ii	Some attitudes to blood
iii	Good, but not so quick
iv	Two ideas see a wrong conclusion
v	Complicated identification
vi	An interesting treatment
vii	A shorter life, but just as important
viii	The Principal part that adds some colour
ix	Bone marrow and blood
x	Maintaining supplies

Example	Answer
Paragraph A	ii
Paragraph B	27 <input type="text"/>
Paragraph C	28 <input type="text"/>
Paragraph D	29 <input type="text"/>

Paragraph E	30 <input type="text"/>
Paragraph F	31 <input type="text"/>
Paragraph G	32 <input type="text"/>
Paragraph H	33 <input type="text"/>

Questions 34-37

Complete the table.

Choose **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** from the passage for each answer.

Blood Component	Associated Fact
red cells	upon dying, dealt with by 34 <input type="text"/>
white cells	require 35 <input type="text"/> before attacking invaders
platelets	Their numbers need careful 36 <input type="text"/>
37 <input type="text"/>	Many varieties exist.

Questions 38-40

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

38 Blood cross-matching can be done without special equipment.

39 In poorer countries, family members often donate blood.

40 Bleeding people was a painful process.



Solution:

Part 1: Question 1 - 13

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 disgusting appearance | 2 domestic hygiene |
| 3 wasp | 4 flatten (bodies) |
| 5 FALSE | 6 TRUE |
| 7 FALSE | 8 NOT GIVEN |
| 9 pheromones | 10 co-operate |
| 11 admiration | 12 D |
| 13 B | |

Part 2: Question 14 - 26

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| 14 TRUE | 15 NOT GIVEN |
| 16 TRUE | 17 (the) bishop |
| 18 (to) accelerate play | 19 (Garry) Kasparov |
| 20 subliminal memory | 21 theoretical study |
| 22 huge population | 23 faster processing |

24 intelligence

25 B

26 C

Part 3: Question 27 - 40

27 viii

28 vii

29 i

30 v

31 iii

32 x

33 iv

34 spleen and liver

35 sufficient numbers

36 regulation

37 antigens

38 FALSE

39 TRUE

40 NOT GIVEN