



IELTS Mock Test 2021 December Reading Practice Test 1

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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.



Synaesthesia

A

Imagine a page with a square box in the middle. The box is lined with rows of the number 5, repeated over and over. All of the 5s are identical in size, font and colour, and equally distributed across the box. There is, however, a trick: among those 5s, hiding in plain sight is a single, capital letter S. Almost the same in shape, it is impossible to spot without straining your eyes for a good few minutes. Unless that is, you are a grapheme – colour synaesthete – a person who sees each letter and number in different colours. With all the 5s painted in one colour and the rogue S painted in another, a grapheme – colour synaesthete will usually only need a split second to identify the latter.

B

Synaesthesia, loosely translated as “senses coming together” from the Greek words syn (“with”) and aesthesis (“sensation”), is an interesting neurological phenomenon that causes different senses to be combined. This might mean that words have a particular taste (for example, the word “door” might taste like bacon), or that certain smells produce a particular colour. It might also mean that each letter and number has its own personality-the letter A might be perky, the letter B might be shy and self-conscious, etc. Some synaesthetes might even experience other people’s sensations, for example feeling pain in their chest when they witness a film character gets shot. The possibilities are endless: even though synaesthesia is believed to affect less than 5% of the general population, at least 60 different combinations of senses have been reported so far. What all these sensory associations have in common is that they are all involuntary and impossible to repress and that they usually remain quite stable over time.

C

Synaesthesia was first documented in the early 19th century by German physician Georg Sachs, who dedicated two pages of his dissertation on his own experience with the condition. It wasn't, however, until the mid-1990s that empirical research proved its existence when Professor Simon Baron-Cohen and his colleagues used fMRIs on six synaesthetes and discovered that the parts of the brain associated with vision were active during auditory stimulation, even though the subjects were blindfolded.

D

What makes synaesthesia a particularly interesting condition is that it isn't an illness at all. If anything, synaesthetes often report feeling sorry for the rest of the population, as they don't have the opportunity to experience the world in a multisensory fashion like they do. Very few drawbacks have been described, usually minimal: for instance, some words might have an unpleasant taste (imagine the word "hello" tasting like spoiled milk), while some synaesthetes find it distressing when they encounter people with names which don't reflect their personality (imagine meeting a very interesting person named "Lee", when the letter E has a dull or hideous colour for you-or vice versa). Overall, however, synaesthesia is widely considered more of a blessing than a curse and it is often linked to intelligence and creativity, with celebrities such as Lady Gaga and Pharrell Williams claiming to have it.

E

Another fascinating side of synaesthesia is the way it could potentially benefit future generations. In a 2013 study, Dr Witthof and Dr Winawer discovered that grapheme-colour synaesthetes who had never met each other before experienced strikingly similar pairings between graphemes and colours-pairings which were later traced back to a popular set of Fischer-Price magnets that ten out of eleven participants distinctly remembered possessing as children. This was particularly peculiar as synaesthesia is predominantly considered to be a hereditary condition, and the findings suggested that a synaesthete's environment might play a determining role in establishing synaesthetic associations. If that was true, researchers asked, then might it not be possible that synaesthesia can actually be taught?

F

As it turns out, the benefits of teaching synaesthesia would be tremendous. According to research conducted by Dr Clare Jonas at the University of East London, teaching people to create grapheme-colour associations the same way as a synaesthete may have the possibility to improve cognitive function and memory. As she put it, 'one possibility is guarding against cognitive decline in older people-using synaesthesia in the creation of mnemonics to remember things such as shopping lists.' To that end, researchers in the Netherlands have already begun developing a web browser plug-in that will change the colours of certain letters. Rothen and his colleagues corroborate the theory: in a paper published in 2011, they suggest that synaesthesia might be more than a hereditary condition, as the non-synaesthetic subjects of their study were able to mimic synaesthetic associations long after leaving the lab.

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G

There is obviously still a long way to go before we can fully understand synaesthesia and what causes it. Once we do, however, it might not be too long before we find out how to teach non-synaesthetes how to imitate its symptoms in a way that induces the same benefits 4.4% of the world's population currently enjoy.

Questions 1-7

The reading passage has 7 paragraphs, **A-G**.

Which paragraph contains the following information?

Write the correct letter, **A-G**, in boxes **1-7** on your answer sheet.

- 1 some of the disadvantages related to synaesthesia
- 2 what scientists think about synaesthesia's real-life usefulness
- 3 a prediction for the future of synaesthesia
- 4 an example of how grapheme-colour synaesthesia works
- 5 a brief history of synaesthesia
- 6 some of the various different types of synaesthesia
- 7 information about a study that suggests synaesthetic symptoms aren't arbitrary

Questions 8-11

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

In boxes **8-11** 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

- 8 There are 60 different types of synaesthesia.
- 9 Before Professor Simon Baron-Cohen's research, synaesthesia was thought to be a myth.

10 A lot of celebrities are affected by synaesthesia.

11 Most scientists believe that synaesthesia runs in families.

Questions 12-14

Complete the summary.

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

Write your answers in boxes **12-14** on your answer sheet

Synaesthesia is a unique neurological condition that causes different senses to get mixed.
Recent research has suggested that teaching synaesthesia to non-synaesthetes can enhance
12 _____ and guard against the deterioration of cognitive 13 _____ unfortunately,
it might be a while before we come up with a beneficial way to 14 _____ it to the
general population.

READING PASSAGE 2

You should spend about 20 minutes on Questions 15-27, which are based on Reading Passage 2 below.



LOCKED DOORS, OPEN ACCESS

The word, 'security', has both positive and negative connotations. Most of us would say that we crave security for all its positive virtues, both physical and psychological – its evocation of the safety of home, of undying love, or of freedom from need. More negatively, the word nowadays conjures up images of that huge industry which has developed to protect individuals and property from invasion by outsiders', ostensibly malicious and intent on theft or wilful damage.

Increasingly, because they are situated in urban areas of escalating crime, those buildings which used to allow free access to employees and other users (buildings such as offices, schools, colleges or hospitals) now do not. Entry areas which in another age were called 'Reception' are now manned by security staff. Receptionists, whose task it was to receive visitors and to make them welcome before passing them on to the person they had come to see, have been replaced by those whose task it is to bar entry to the unauthorized, the unwanted or the plain unappealing.

Inside, these buildings are divided into 'secure zones' which often have all the trappings of combination locks and burglar alarms. These devices bar entry to the uninitiated, hinder circulation, and create parameters of time and space for user access. Within the spaces created by these zones, individual rooms are themselves under lock and key, which is a particular problem when it means that working space becomes compartmentalized.

To combat the consequent difficulty of access to people at a physical level, we have now developed technological access. Computers sit on every desk and are linked to one another, and in many cases to an external universe of other computers, so that messages can be passed to and fro. Here too security plays a part, since we must not be allowed access to messages destined for others. And so the password was invented. Now correspondence between individuals goes from desk to desk and cannot be accessed by colleagues. Library catalogues

can be searched from one's desk. Papers can be delivered to, and received from, other people at the press of a button.

And yet it seems that, just as work is isolating individuals more and more, organizations are recognizing the advantages of team-work'; perhaps in order to encourage employees to talk to one another again. Yet, how can groups work in teams if the possibilities for communication are reduced? How can they work together if e-mail provides a convenient electronic shield behind which the blurring of public and private can be exploited by the less scrupulous? If voice-mail walls up messages behind a password? If I can't leave a message on my colleague's desk because his office is locked?

Team-work conceals the fact that another kind of security, 'job security', is almost always not on offer. Just as organizations now recognize three kinds of physical resources: those they buy, those they lease long-term and those they rent short-term – so it is with their human resources. Some employees have permanent contracts, some have short-term contracts, and some are regarded simply as casual labour.

Telecommunication systems offer us the direct line, which means that individuals can be contacted without the caller having to talk to anyone else. Voice-mail and the answer-phone mean that individuals can communicate without ever actually talking to one another. If we are unfortunate enough to contact organizations with sophisticated touch-tone systems, we can buy things and pay for them without ever speaking to a human being.

To combat this closing in on ourselves we have the Internet, which opens out communication channels more widely than anyone could possibly want or need. An individual's electronic presence on the Internet is known as a Home Page' – suggesting the safety and security of an electronic hearth. An elaborate system of 3-dimensional graphics distinguishes this very 2-dimensional medium of 'web sites'. The nomenclature itself creates the illusion of a geographical entity, that the person sitting before the computer is travelling, when in fact the site' is coming to him. 'Addresses' of one kind or another move to the individual, rather than the individual moving between them, now that location is no longer geographical.

An example of this is the mobile phone. I am now not available either at home or at work, but wherever I take my mobile phone. Yet, even now, we cannot escape the security of wanting to locate' the person at the other end. It is no coincidence that almost everyone we see answering or initiating a mobile phone-call in public begins by saying where he or she is.

Questions 15-18

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

Write your answers in boxes 15-18 on your answer sheet.

15 According to the author, one thing we long for is

- A the safety of the home.
- B security
- C open access.
- D positive virtues.

16 Access to many buildings

- A is unauthorised.
- B is becoming more difficult.
- C is a cause of crime in many urban areas.
- D used to be called 'Reception'.

17 Buildings used to permit access to any users

- A but now they do not.
- B and still do now.
- C especially offices and schools.
- D especially in urban areas.

18 Secure zones

- A do not allow access to the user.
- B compartmentalise the user.
- C are often like traps.
- D are not accessible to everybody.

Questions 19-24

Complete the summary below using words from the box.

Write your answers in boxes 19-24 on your answer sheet.

The problem of physical access to buildings has now been 19 _____ by technology. Messages are sent between 20 _____ with passwords not allowing 21 _____ to read someone else's messages. But, while individuals are becoming increasingly 22 _____ socially by the way they do their job, at the same time more value is being put on 23 _____. However, e-mail and voice-mail have led to a 24 _____ opportunities for person-to-person communication.

reducing of	decrease in	team-work	similar
no different from	solved	overcame	physical
computer	computers	combat	developed
other people	cut-off	isolating	

Questions 25-27

Complete the sentences below with words taken from Reading Passage 2.

Use **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes 25-27 on your answer sheet.

The writer does not like 25 _____

An individual's Home Page indicates their 26 _____ on the Internet.

Devices like mobile phones mean that location is 27 _____

READING PASSAGE 3

You should spend about 20 minutes on Questions 28-40, which are based on Reading Passage 3 below.



A leap into history

- A.** Between the Inishowen peninsula, north west of Derry, and the Glens of Antrim, in the east beyond the Sperrin Mountains, is found some of Western Europe's most captivating and alluring landscape.
- B.** The Roe Valley Park, some 15 miles east of Derry is a prime example. The Park, like so many Celtic places, is steeped in history and legend. As the Roc trickles down through heather bogs in the Sperrin Mountains to the South, it is a river by the time it cuts through what was once called the 'garden of the soul' – in Celtic 'Gortenanima'.
- C.** The castle of O'Cahan once stood here and a number of houses which made up the town of Limavady. The town takes its name from the legend of a dog leaping into the river Roe carrying a message, or perhaps chasing a stag. This is a wonderful place, where the water traces its way through rock and woodland; at times, lingering in brooding pools of dark cool water under the shade of summer trees, and, at others, forming weirs and leads for water mills now long gone.
- D.** The Roe, like all rivers, is witness to history and change. To Mullagh Hill, on the west bank of the River Roe just outside the present day town of Limavady, St Columba came in 575 AD for the Convention of Drumceatt. The world is probably unaware that it knows something of Limavady; but the town is, in fact, renowned for Jane Ross's song *Danny Roy*, written to a tune once played by a tramp in the street. Limavady town itself and many of the surrounding villages have Celtic roots but no one knows for sure just how old the original settlement of Limavady is.
- E.** Some 30 miles along the coast road from Limavady, one comes upon the forlorn, but imposing ruin of Dunluce Castle, which stands on a soft basalt outcrop, in defiance of the turbulent Atlantic lashing it on all sides. The jagged-toothed ruins sit proud on their rock top

commanding the coastline to east and west. The only connection to the mainland is by a narrow bridge. Until the kitchen court fell into the sea in 1639 killing several servants, the castle was fully inhabited. In the next hundred years or so, the structure gradually fell into its present dramatic state of disrepair, stripped of its roofs by wind and weather and robbed by man of its caned stonework. Ruined and forlorn its aspect maybe yet, in the haunting Celtic twilight of the long summer evenings, it is redolent of another age, another dream.

F. A mile or so to the east of the castle lies Port na Spaniagh, where the Neapolitan Galleas, Girona, from the Spanish Armada went down one dark October night in 1588 on its way to Scotland, of the 1500-odd men on board, nine survived.

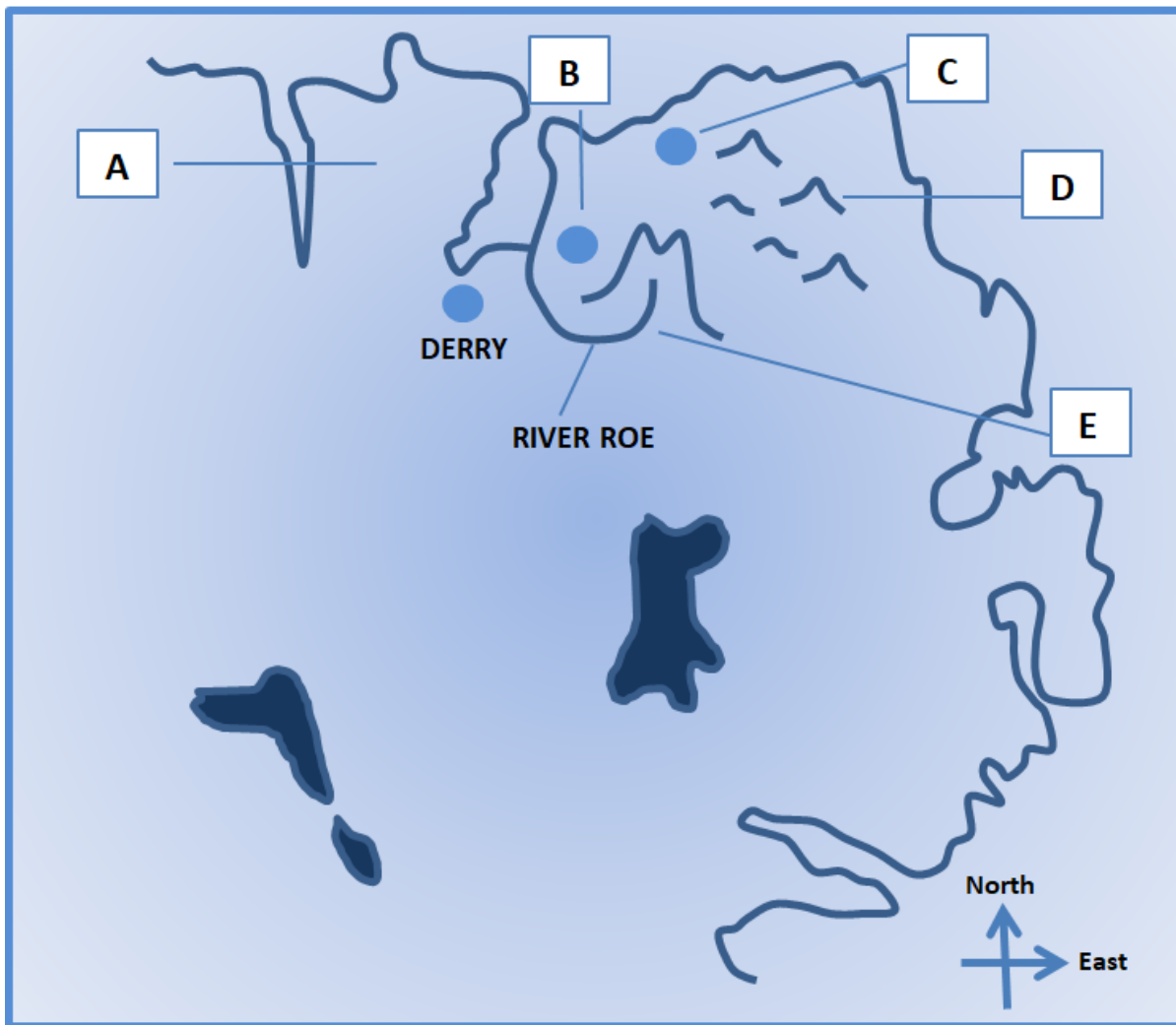
G. Even further to the east, is the Giant's Causeway stunning coastline with strangely symmetrical columns of dark basalt – a beautiful geological wonder. Someone once said of the Causeway that it was worth seeing, but not worth going to see. That was in the days of horses and carriages, when travelling was difficult. But it is certainly well worth a visit. The last lingering moments of the twilight hours are the best time to savour the full power of the coastline's magic; the time when the place comes into its own. The tourists are gone and if you are very lucky you will be alone. A fine circular walk will take you down to the Grand Causeway, past amphitheatres of stone columns and formations. It is not frightening, but there is a power in the place – tangible, yet inexplicable. The blackness of some nights conjure up feelings of eeriness and unease. The visitor realises his place in the scheme of the magnificent spectacle. Once experienced, it is impossible to forget the grandeur of the landscape.

H. Beyond the Causeway, connecting the mainland with an outcrop of rock jutting out of the turbulent Atlantic, is the Carrick-a-Rede Rope Bridge, when first constructed, the bridge was a simple rope handrail with widely spaced slats which was used mainly by salmon fishermen needing to travel from the island to the mainland. In time, the single handrail was replaced with a more sturdy caged bridge, however, it is still not a crossing for the faint-hearted. The Bridge swings above a chasm of rushing, foaming water that seems to drag the unwary down, and away. Many visitors who make the walk one way are unable to return resulting in them being taken off the island by boat.

Questions 28-32

Looking at the following list of places (Questions 28–32) from the paragraphs A-E of reading passage 3 and their locations on the map.

Match each place with its location on the map



Write your answers in boxes 28-32 on your answer sheet.

28 The Sperrin Mountains

29 Dunluce Castle

30 Inishowen

31 The Glens of Antrim

32 Limavady

Questions 33-38

Do the following statements reflect the claims of the writer in Reading Passage 3?

In boxes 33-38 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

33 After 1639, the castle of Dunluce was not completely uninhabited.

34 For the author, Dunluce Castle evokes another period of history.

35 There were more than 1500 men on die Girona when it went down.

36 The writer believes that the Giant's Causeway is worth going to visit.

37 The author recommends twilight as the best time to visit the Giant's Causeway.

38 The more study cage added to the Carrick-a-Rede Rope Bridge has helped to increase the number of visitors to the area.

Questions 39-40

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

Write your answers in boxes **39-40** on your answer sheet.

39 The writer feels that the Giant's Causeway is

- A** an unsettling place.
- B** a relaxing place.
- C** a boring place.
- D** an exciting place.

40 Which of the following would be a good title for the passage?

- A** The Roe Valley Park.
- B** The Giant's Causeway.

- C Going East to West.
- D A leap into history.



Solution:

Part 1: Question 1 - 14

- | | |
|-------------|--------------|
| 1 D | 2 F |
| 3 G | 4 A |
| 5 C | 6 B |
| 7 E | 8 FALSE |
| 9 NOT GIVEN | 10 NOT GIVEN |
| 11 TRUE | 12 memory |
| 13 function | 14 teach |

Part 2: Question 15 - 27

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| 15 B | 16 B |
| 17 A | 18 D |
| 19 solved | 20 computers |
| 21 other people | 22 cut-off |
| 23 team-work | 24 decrease in |

25 touch-tone systems

26 electronic presence

27 no longer geographical

Part 3: Question 28 - 40

28 E

29 C

30 A

31 D

32 B

33 NOT GIVEN

34 YES

35 YES

36 YES

37 YES

38 NOT GIVEN

39 A

40 D