



IELTS Reading Strategies

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Reading Lesson 9

The aim of this exercise is to develop your **IELTS reading strategies** in order to find the answers to questions such as 'short answer' as quickly as possible.

The key to doing this quickly is to recognize the section of the text which relates to the question.

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However, it is usual to find that the question stem will include words that are **synonyms** of the words rather than the words from the actual text, or if it is not synonyms there will be **phrases** that have the same meaning as a phrase in the text.

If they did not do this it would be too easy to find the answers.

This text is shorter than the texts you will get in the test, but it is just an activity to introduce you to the idea of using the question to help you find the answer and to provide you with some IELTS reading strategies that you can put to use in the test.

You won't have questions like this in the actual test.

IELTS Reading Strategies Exercise

Hong Kong takes steps to improve English

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- a) The Hong Kong government today published proposals to introduce basic English language competency assessments for primary, secondary and university students as well as some professionals. The goal is to bolster written English and Chinese as well as spoken English and Mandarin in the former British colony.
- b) The government said it wanted to push students to improve their English, but officials acknowledged Hong Kong had little chance of competing with rival trading centre Singapore.
- c) English is an official language in both Hong Kong and Singapore, but many more Singaporeans are fluent in it because it is taught as a first language in schools.
- d) “People always compare Singapore’s English with our English,” said Michael Tien, a businessman who also serves as chairman of Hong Kong’s standing committee on language education and research.
- e) “Don’t forget English in Singapore is their first language,” he told reporters. “I don’t think it’s a fair comparison. With reading and writing Chinese, they are way behind us.”
- f) Hong Kong’s dominant language is the Cantonese dialect of Chinese. Mr Tien said the territory is also pushing ahead to lift standards of Mandarin, the main dialect in mainland China. Although Hong Kong was a British colony until 1997 and many residents speak impeccable English, many more do not. Some critics believe this to be an economic hindrance because English is the international language of business.
- g) Many students in Hong Kong are taught in Cantonese because few teachers are proficient enough in English. Mr Tien said raising the standard would be a “tall order.”
- h) “English is challenging,” he said. “I don’t think we can expect 100% of our people to be fluent in English, so I’m shooting for university graduates to start with.”

Tips

Look at question **(1)** and compare it with paragraph **(a)**. Which words help you identify the answer?

Example:

(1) How does the Hong Kong government intend to measure the level of spoken English?

The ‘*Hong Kong government*’ indicates that we are looking at the correct paragraph but we need to find how they ‘*intend to measure*.’



The word '*proposals*' is used as a noun in the text, but '*to propose*' is a verb that means '*intend*', so we can say that the Hong Kong government intends to introduce basic English Language competency assessments.

To 'assess' means to '*measure the level*' of something, and in this case we know that they want to measure peoples' Basic English Language, so we can answer:

Answer To introduce competency assessments.

Paragraph Indicator "The Hong Kong Government."

Words that help to identify "proposals" and "assessments."

So you can use these IELTS reading strategies to help you find answers to questions quickly.

Practice

Now it is your turn to have a practice. It is important to note though that if you choose a different paragraph indicator, this does not matter as long as it was correct in helping you to find the right paragraph and answer.

Answer the questions below using **NO MORE THAN 4 WORDS**.

Don't refresh the webpage or you'll lose your answers!

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- b) The government said it wanted to push students to improve their English, but officials acknowledged Hong Kong had little chance of competing with rival trading centre Singapore.
- c) English is an official language in both Hong Kong and Singapore, but many more

Singaporeans are fluent in it because it is taught as a first language in schools.

d) "People always compare Singapore's English with our English," said Michael Tien, a businessman who also serves as chairman of Hong Kong's standing committee on language education and research.

e) "Don't forget English in Singapore is their first language," he told reporters. "I don't think it's a fair comparison. With reading and writing Chinese, they are way behind us."

f) Hong Kong's dominant language is the Cantonese dialect of Chinese. Mr Tien said the territory is also pushing ahead to lift standards of Mandarin, the main dialect in mainland China. Although Hong Kong was a British colony until 1997 and many residents speak impeccable English, many more do not. Some critics believe this to be an economic hindrance because English is the international language of business.

g) Many students in Hong Kong are taught in Cantonese because few teachers are proficient enough in English. Mr Tien said raising the standard would be a "tall order."

h) "English is challenging," he said. "I don't think we can expect 100% of our people to be fluent in English, so I'm shooting for university graduates to start with."

(1) How is English learnt in Singaporean schools?

Answer

Paragraph Indicator

Words that help to identify

(2) In what areas are the Hong Kong people ahead of those in Singapore?

Answer

Paragraph Indicator

Words that help to identify

(3) What other areas of language does the chairman want to improve?

Answer



Paragraph Indicator

Words that help to identify

(4) What do a number of people think the poor quality of English is?

Answer

Paragraph Indicator

Words that help to identify

(5) What does the chairman consider to be very difficult due to the lack skilled instructors?

Answer

Paragraph Indicator

Words that help to identify

IELTS Reading Strategies – Answers

(1) How is English learnt in Singaporean schools?

Answer As a first language

Paragraph Indicator Singapore/schools

Words that help to identify taught

(2) In what areas are the Hong Kong people ahead of those in Singapore?

Answer Reading and writing Chinese

Paragraph Indicator compare Singapore's English

Words that help to identify behind

(3) What other areas of language does the chairman want to improve?



Answer standards of Mandarin

Paragraph Indicator Mr. Tien/ dominant language is Cantonese

Words that help to identify pushing ahead to lift standards

(4) What do a number of people think the poor quality of English is?

Answer an economic hindrance

Paragraph Indicator many do not speak impeccable English

Words that help to identify some critics believe

(5) What does the chairman consider to be very difficult due to the lack skilled instructors?

Answer raising the standard

Paragraph Indicator Mr. Tien/ lack of skilled instructors

Words that help to identify tall order/very difficult

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