

Practice Test 55

Reading Passage 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on Questions 1-12, which are based on Reading Passage 1 below.

The Nature Of Addiction

A. Many people would perhaps, at least as an immediate response, not consider themselves to be 'addicts', yet a closer look into aspects of lifestyle and mental attitude often reveal a far different picture. The main problem at presents that the traditional definition of the word has become blurred and the lines between addiction and interest are far harder to identify. In the past, the label 'addict' was generally applied to those with an insatiable appetite for certain substances that were traditionally known to be harmful, illegal or both: psychoactive drugs, alcohol and nicotine, for example. More recently, however, we find that there is a multitude of potential addictions. Gambling, food, work, shopping – all of which are potential areas where addiction can lurk.

B. To try to define the subject of addiction (and in many cases the subsequent course of treatment to best combat it), psychologists now commonly referred to three distinct categories. The first is related to those forms of addictions that are perhaps not life-threatening or particularly dangerous, and are often labelled in an almost tongue-in-cheek manner, such as the consumption of chocolate possibly leading to the creation of a 'chocoholic'. This category is referred to as soft addiction and is generally related only to a potential loss of productivity; in the workplace, an employee who is addicted to social networking sites is likely to be a less useful member of staff.

C. Substance addiction, however, is a completely different category and focuses 'on ingestion of a drug (either natural or synthetic) to temporarily alter the chemical constitution of the brain. It is a combination of physical and psychological dependency on substances that have known health dangers, and the knock-on problem that users in an addicted state will often go to great lengths to acquire these substances, hence leading to the very strong connection between drug abuse and crime.

D. Finally, there is a behavioural addiction, which is regarded as 'a compulsion to engage in some specific activity, despite harmful consequences' and is a relatively recent entrant to the field. This is where the 'soft' addictions taken to go beyond a safe limit and can become dangerous. Overeating, especially on sweetened foods, is one of the more common behavioural addictions, potentially leading to morbid obesity and associated health risks. Also included in this grouping are concerns like excessive gambling, and for

many, the combination of the availability and anonymity of the internet, as well as a plethora of online gambling sites, has led to a vast increase in this form of addiction.

E. However, the point at which a soft addiction becomes a behavioural addiction is both hard to define and cause of significant controversy. A child who comes home after school and plays on the internet for three hours is considered by some to be suffering from a behavioural addiction; to others, this is just a modern form of leisure time and just as valid as reading a book or playing outside. Another point of friction among people involved in studying and treating sufferers is that some of the issues covered by the umbrella term 'addiction' are actually mislabelled, and they belong more to a different category altogether and should be referred to as 'Impulse control disorders'.

F. The correct course of action when attempting to overcome an addiction varies greatly between the type of addiction it is but also varies considerably among the medical community. Take substance addiction, for example. The traditional approach has been to remove the source – that is, remove the availability of the drug – but this is now no longer concerned the best long term approach. The old idea of incarcerating the addict away from any drugs proved faulty as this did not prevent relapses when back in society. There is now an increasing tendency to consider not only the mechanical nature of addiction but the psychological source. Often, extreme addictions – both substance-based and behavioural – stem from a psychological root such as stress, guilt, depression and rejection, and it is for this reason that counselling and open discussion are having more successful long-term results.

G. For non-professionals with people in their lives who are suffering from some form of addiction, the importance now is in focussing on supporting their recovery, not enabling their dependence. Judgemental attitudes or helping to conceal addiction have been shown not only to perpetuate the problem but in many cases actually exacerbate it.

Questions 1-6

Reading Passage 1 has seven paragraphs **A-G**. Choose the correct heading for paragraphs **B to G** from the list of headings below.

Write the correct number **i-x** in boxes **1-6** on your answer sheet.

List of Headings

- i. A change in methods
- i. The falling level of addiction



- iii. Biological changes and associated risks
- iv. The long term damage of addiction
- v. Disagreements about definition
- vi. Advice for those involved
- vii. The changing nature of addiction in children
- viii. The lack of clarity in modern interpretations of addiction
- ix. Modern label for taking addiction to extremes
- x. Not all addictions are cause for concern

Example: Paragraph A; Answer: viii

1 Paragraph B

2 Paragraph C

3 Paragraph D

4 Paragraph E

5 Paragraph F

6 Paragraph G

Questions 7-12

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

Write your answers in boxes **7-12** on your answer sheet.

7 It is increasingly difficult to differentiate between addiction and what?

8 What can soft addictions lead to a decline in?

9 Addictions that involve the consumption of a drug and have a clear connection with what?

10 What specific addiction has increased considerably over recent years?

11 In some cases, addictions should actually be labelled as to what?

12 Extreme addictions often have what kind of root cause?

Also check:

- [IELTS Reading](#)
- [Tips to Improve IELTS Reading Skills](#)
- [IELTS Academic Reading Practice test](#)
- [True False Not Given IELTS Reading](#)
- [IELTS Reading recent actual test](#)
- [IELTS Academic Reading test papers with answers pdf](#)

Reading Passage 2

You should spend about 20 minutes on Questions 13-26 which are based on Reading Passage 2 below.

Poisonous Animals

A. Often benign and beautiful, there are so many potential dangers, often lethal, hidden in the natural world that our continued existence on the planet is actually quite astounding. Earthquakes, tsunamis and volcanoes are some of the nature's more cataclysmic risks but fade in comparison to the dangers presented by the more aggressive flora and fauna around the world.

B. There are two classes of creature that use chemicals in either attack or defence, but it is important to draw a distinction between those that are considered poisonous and those that are venomous. A poisonous creature is one that has a chemical component to dissuade potential predators; they usually secrete toxins through their skin so that their attacker is poisoned. A venomous creature, on the other hand, is not so passive – they use toxins not in defence but in the attack. This differentiation is often seen in the colouring of the creatures in question – those with poisonous toxins are often brightly coloured as a warning to potential predators, whereas those classed as venomous are often camouflaged to blend in with their surroundings, making them more efficient hunters.

C. One of the most poisonous animals known to man is the poison arrow frog, native to Central and South America. Secreting poison through its skin, a single touch is enough to kill a fully grown human (in fact, the frog earned its name from the practice of putting tiny amounts of this poison onto blow darts used by the native population mainly for hunting

and, historically at least, also for battle). It is interesting to note, however, that when bred in captivity, the dart frog is not actually poisonous – it generates its protection from its diet of poisonous ants, centipedes and mites.

D. Another poisonous creature is the pufferfish, which is actually served as a delicacy in Japan. Although not aggressive or externally dangerous, its extremely high levels of toxicity cause rapid paralysis and death when ingested, and there is at this point no known antidote, hence preparation of pufferfish (called ‘fugu’ in Japan) is restricted only to licensed chefs. In the last ten years, it has been estimated that over 40 people have been killed by fugu poisoning due to incorrect preparation of the fish.

E. Although there are many hundreds, even thousands of poisonous fauna, the number of venomous animals on the planet far exceeds their number, perhaps the most well-known of which are snakes and spiders. In the snake world, the most lethal is the Inland Taipan. Able to kill up to 100 humans with the intensity of the toxin in one bite, it can cause death in as little as 45 minutes. Fortunately, they are not only very shy when it comes to human contact there is also a known antivenin (cure), although this needs to be administered quickly. In the arachnid world, the spider that has been identified as being the most venomous is the Brazilian wandering spider. It is responsible for the most number of human deaths of any spider, but perhaps more alarmingly it is true to its name, hiding during daytime in populated areas, such as inside houses, clothes, footwear and cars.

F. When scientifically calculating the most venomous, there are two points which are considered: how many people can be killed with one ounce of the toxin, and how long it takes for death to occur. Without a doubt, the overall winner in this category is the box jellyfish. Found mainly in waters in the Indo-Pacific area, they are notorious in Australia and have even been seen as far south as New Zealand. The box jellyfish has tentacles that can be as long as 10 feet (hence their other name ‘Fire Medusae’ after Medusa, a mythological character who had snakes for hair). Each tentacle has billions of stinging cells, which, when they come into contact with others, can shoot a poisonous barb from each cell. These barbs inject toxins which attack the nervous system, heart and skin cells, the intense pain of which can cause human victims to go in shock, drown or die of heart failure before even reaching shore.

Questions 13-15

According to the information in the passage, classify the following information as relating to:

A Poisonous creatures

B Venomous creatures

C Both poisonous and venomous creatures

Write the correct letter, **A, B or C** in boxes **13-15** on your answer sheet



13 are protected by secretions on their skin.

14 are often coloured to match the environment.

15 aggressively use toxins.

Questions 16-22

Do the following statements agree with the information given in Reading Passage 2?

In boxes **16-22** 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

16 There is a common misunderstanding of the difference between poisonous and venomous

17 Significant environmental disasters are more damaging than animals

18 The poison dart frog obtains its poison from its environment

19 Touching a puffer fish can cause paralysis

20 The Brazilian Wandering spider kills more people every year than any other venomous creature

21 The box jellyfish can cause death by drowning

22 The tentacles on a box jellyfish are used for movement

Questions 23-26

Answer the questions below.

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



Write your answers in boxes **23-26** on your answer sheet.

23 What do the people of South and Central America principally use poisoned blow darts for these days?

24 The venom of which creature can be neutralized if medical intervention is swift?

25 Where does the Brazilian Wandering spider often sleep?

26 After whom does the box jellyfish have its other name?

Reading Passage 3

You should spend about 20 minutes on Questions 27 – 40 which are based on Reading Passage 3.

Problem-Solving And Decision Making

A. In the business world, much as in life in general, there are challenges that need to be faced, problems that need solutions and decisions that need to be made and acted upon. Over recent years, the psychology behind problem-solving and decision making in a business context has been analysed and taught at a tertiary level.

B. Marie Scrive, a senior lecturer at Carling University, argues that poor management skills can be identified in many areas, but few are perhaps as illustrative as the ability to make accurate judgements about a course of action to overcome an obstacle. She argues that there is a tendency for decisions to be made quickly, leading to only short term solutions and a recurrence of the problem at a later date. Pressure from other managers, senior staff or even employees can cause those in middle management to make decisions based quickly, reacting at speed to a problem that would have been better solved by a calmer, more inclusive style of management. However, Martin Hewings, author of Strategic Thinking, believes that the root of the issue is not in the speed at which a response is required but in a flawed way of looking at the problem from the outset. His argument is that most repetitive problems are actually not permanently resolved because of a lack of focus as to the true nature of the problem. He advocates a system whereby the problem must be clearly defined before the appropriate course of action can be decided upon, and this is achieved by applying questions to the problem itself: why is this happening? When is this happening? With whom is this happening?

C. Garen Filke, Managing Director of a large paper supply company, has put Hewings' steps to the test, and although he referred to the results as 'potentially encouraging', there remains the feeling that the focus on who is causing the problem, and this in itself is

the main reason for any implemented solution to falter if not fail. With over 30 years of management experience, Filke holds that looking at the problem as an organic entity in itself, without reference to who may be at fault or at least exacerbating the issue, is the only way to find a lasting solution. Finger-pointing and blaming leads to an uncomfortable work environment where problems grow, and ultimately have a detrimental effect on the productivity of the workplace.

D. Anne Wicks believes that our problem-solving abilities are first run through five distinct filters, and that good manager are those that can negotiate these filters to arrive at an unbiased, logical and clear solution. Wicks has built the filters into a ladder through which all decisions have the potential to be coloured, the first step being programming – from the day we are born, there is an amount of conditioning that means we accept or reject certain points of view almost a reflex action. Programming will, of course, vary from person to person but is often more marked when comparing nationalities. Our programming is the base of our character, but this is then built on by our beliefs, remembering that for someone to believe something does not necessarily mean it is true. So having built from programming to belief, Wicks argues that next on the ladder are our feelings – how we personally react to an issue will skew how we look at solving it. If you feel that someone involved is being unfair or unreasonable, then a solution could over-compensate for this, which of course would not be effective in the long run. This has the potential to impact on the next step – our attitudes. This involves not only those attitudes that are resistant to change but also the daily modifications in how we feel – our mood. A combination of all these steps on the ladder culminate in our actions – what we choose to do or not do – and this is the step that most directly controls the success or failure of the decision making process.

E. For some, however, the more psycho-analytical approach to problem-solving has little place in a business decision – a point of view held by John Tate, former CEO of Allied Enterprise and Shipping, who believes the secret behind a solid decision is more mechanical. Tate argues that a decision should be made after a consideration of all alternatives, and a hierarchical structure that then takes responsibility for the decision and, most importantly, follows that decision through to verify whether the problem has indeed been resolved. From his point of view, a flawed decision is not one that did not work, but one that was decided on by too many people leaving no single person with sufficient accountability to ensure its success.

Question 27-33

Match each statement with the correct person.

Write the correct answer **A-D** in boxes **27-33** on your answer sheet.



27 A successful solution can only be found when there is a clear corporate structure for decision making.

28 Decisions made without full consideration of the details are a potential by-product of pressure.

29 Decision making that does not look into motives for the issue is the primary reason for continued problems.

30 Poor decision making is the most easily identified form of weak managerial ability.

31 Seeking a staff member on whom responsibility can be placed can have negative effects.

32 Decision-making abilities are at least partly formulated long before they have any business application.

33 Long term solutions can only be found by asking the right questions.

List of People

A Marie Scribe

B Martin Hewings

C Garen Filke

D Anne Wicks

E John Tate

Questions 34-37

Complete the flowchart below.

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

Write your answers in boxes 34 to 37 on your answer sheet.