



Understanding Not Given Questions

IELTS Reading True False Not Given Exercises

Reading Lesson 12

This IELTS Reading true false not given exercise will help you to improve your ability to answer these types of question.

They always present problems for students, particularly because of the difficulty in understanding the difference between answers that are 'false' or 'not given'.

In true, false, not given questions you are given some 'factual' statements taken from the reading and you have to decide if they match what is actually stated in the reading.

[restrict paid=true]

Reading in Detail

An important part of doing this is making sure that you **read in detail** the part of the text where you think the answer is.

You can skim the text to find where the answer is, but you must read that part very carefully to decide if it matches the statement.

This also of course means making sure you **read the question / statement carefully**. You must fully understand it in order to find the answer and assess them against each other.

Understanding the Statements

True

If the statement is true then it will **exactly** match the facts given in the reading. But remember that does not mean they will be written in exactly the same way.

The statement will be a paraphrase of what is in the text. That's one reason why you have



to read very carefully.

False

If the statement is false that means it **contradicts or is opposite to** the information given in the reading.

Not Given

This means that you **cannot tell if the statement is true or false** from looking at the reading. The information to make the decision as regards true or false is **not there**.

Understanding 'Not Given' Questions

These questions are notorious for getting candidates confused.

A not given question does not mean that there is no information in the statement that can be seen in the text.

You will find something related to the statement in the text and using some of the same words.

The point is that you won't have the information there to make a decision as to whether it is true or false.

Take a look at the paragraph below taken from a reading in a real IELTS test, and the statement below it which is a 'not given' statement connected to the paragraph.

The reading was about the intelligence of ants.

Sample 'Not Given' Question

When we survey Mexico City, Tokyo, Los Angeles, we are amazed at what has been accomplished by humans. Yet Hoelldobler and Wilson's magnificent work for ant

lovers, *The Ants*, describes a super colony of the ant *Formica yessensis* on the Ishikari Coast of Hokkaido. This 'megapolis' was reported to be composed of 360 million workers and a million queens living in 4,500 interconnected nests across a territory of 2.7 square kilometres. Such enduring and intricately meshed levels of technical achievement outstrip by far anything achieved by our distant relatives.

Statement:

Ants can build large cities more quickly than humans do.

If you had the whole reading in the test and you skimmed it to find the answer you would likely be drawn to this paragraph as it talks about '*large cities*'. '*humans*', and how ants have '*outstripped*' (exceeded / done better) anything achieved by humans in the past.

If you rush or don't read it carefully and in detail you may be tempted to mark it 'True' because a lot of the information that is in the statement is in the paragraph.

But although some of the information from the statement is there it does **not** say that ants can build large cities more quickly than humans. It just says that their '*technical achievements*' exceeds that of those humans who build those cities.

You may also be tempted to mark it 'False' as you think of course ants can't build large cities more quickly than humans!

But again, you can't decide something on your **assumptions** or what you know or believe to be true if it **isn't in the reading**.

Exactly what is in the statement must also be in the reading. If it is not there it is 'Not Given'.

Tips

These are some general tips for True, False, Not Given questions:

- *Read the question / statement carefully to make sure you fully understand it.*
- *Underline / note any keywords in it that you can use to skim and find where the matching information is in the text.*
- *They follow in chronological order so once you have found the first one, the others will follow (the next could be in the same paragraph, the next paragraph or further on though).*
- *Be aware of words that can subtly change the meaning of a sentence such as "many", "some", "occasionally" etc.*
- *Don't waste too much time on one question. If you can't find the answer then*



mark it 'not given' – you have a one in three chance it will be correct.

IELTS Reading True False Not Given Exercises

Now you can practice this with these IELTS Reading True False Not Given Exercises.

It's not quite the same as a real reading test from IELTS because you are given the question under each paragraph. This means that the skimming element is missing from this IELTS Reading True False Not Given Exercise.

In the real test of course, the reading is separate from the questions. The point of it is so you can focus instead on analysing the statement and text and decide on the correct answer.

When you have made your choice, click the 'show / hide' answer tab and you can see if you are correct. There is also a short explanation.

The reading is about how women in Sudan are taking weight gaining pills in order to make themselves more attractive.

The Quest for Beauty

Question 1

While skin bleaching is a long-standing cosmetic staple across Sudan, a newer craze is sweeping the nation. Many young women are turning to prescription pills in order to gain weight, and hopefully gain the curvaceous figures they see as the standard of beauty. Away from the regulation of trained pharmacists, fattening pills are illegally dispensed by the same small shops which sell topical bleaching creams and other popular beauty fixes. Sold individually, in small bags and emptied sweet containers, they are completely devoid of any information about medical risks.

1. People do not get any information about the dangers to their health when they purchase unregulated weight gain pills.

[Show / hide answer](#) **Question 2**

It is difficult to estimate how many women in Sudan use these products to gain weight,

because many are reluctant to admit to it. "Pills are handed out in the village like penny sweets," says Imitithal Ahmed, a student at the University of Khartoum. "I've always been scared to use them because I've seen family members fall ill and close friends become dependent on appetite stimulants. My aunt is on the brink of kidney failure and has blocked arteries from taking too many fattening pills, trying to get a bigger bum. Everyone in the family knows why she's sick, but she won't own up to it. She's had to stop taking the pills on doctor's orders."

2. Since a large number of women in Sudan are not willing to reveal that they take the pills, the exact number of women using them is not known.

[Show / hide answer](#) Question 3

Pills are often rebranded and given catchy street names which allude to their effects. From *The Neighbours' Shock* to *Chicken Thighs* and *My Mama Suspects*, the clinical name of pills are forgotten and replaced by promises of a bigger bottom, shapely thighs and a belly that will have your mother concerned that you might be pregnant. Tablets range from standard appetite stimulants to allergy medicines containing the steroid hormone, cortisone. The side-effects of taking cortisone are now a cash cow for pill peddlers. It is known to slow the metabolism, increase appetite, trigger water retention and create extra deposits of fat around the abdomen and face.

3. Promoting the clinical name of the pills helps the sellers to focus on the weight gaining aspects associated with them.

[Show / hide answer](#) Question 4

(This question is again from paragraph three, so take a look at it again above)

4. Those selling the pills are making more money on them than other types of pills.

[Show / hide answer](#) Question 5

Using unregulated steroids without supervision can damage the heart, liver, kidneys and thyroid, says Dr Salah Ibrahim, Head of the Pharmacists' Union in Sudan. He explains that cortisone is a naturally occurring hormone in the body, helping to regulate vital bodily functions. But when a man-made, concentrated version enters the body in the form of pills or topical bleaching creams, the brain gives the body a signal to stop production. If a user suddenly stops taking the substance, their major organs can spiral into dysfunction.

5. The body's cortisone production will eventually return to normal once a person stops taking the pills.

[Show / hide answer](#) Question 6

Young women in Sudan are dying from kidney and heart failure caused by sudden steroid

withdrawal, medical professionals say. Fatalities are especially common among new brides, who traditionally undergo a month of intense beautification prior to their wedding day and then abruptly stop using fattening pills and steroidal bleaching creams. Their deaths are put down to sudden organ failure.

6. Intense usage in the month after marriage followed by sudden withdrawal is resulting in a high death rate for newly wed women.

[Show / hide answers](#)

Question 7

Yet these horrifying beauty trends continue to gain traction. Prescription pill abuse is taking off in Sudan's conservative society, partly because it lacks the social stigma and pungent, giveaway odour of alcohol and cannabis. University students flock to buy the potent painkiller Tramadol, which is sold for 20 Sudanese pounds (\$1; 80 pence) per pill. Some of Khartoum's roadside tea-sellers are even known to drop the painkiller in a cup of tea, upon a coded request.

7. Sudanese society does not view the abuse of prescription pills as negatively as it does other drugs such as alcohol and cannabis.

[Show / hide answers](#)

Question 8

Awareness campaigns have so far had very little impact. Dr Ibrahim, Head of the Pharmacists Union, has made numerous appearances on national television to warn of the dangers of prescription pill abuse. At university level, pharmacists are taught vigilance and trained to act in keeping with ethics and pharmaceutical law. But in a country where pharmacists and doctors are paid very little, the temptation to sell pills to illegal vendors is overwhelming for some. "Last time I went to the beauty shop I go to for my creams, the shop owner brought out a chocolate box full of different fattening pills," says Ms Ahmed, the Khartoum student. "Girls are too scared to ask pharmacists and doctors about the pills they buy from beauty shops, for fear of being publicly shamed."

7. Awareness campaigns are becoming common on national television.

[Show / hide answers](#)

Question 9

(This question is again from the above paragraph, so take a look at it again)

4. The low pay of doctors and pharmacists contributes to the problem of weight pill abuse.



[Show / hide answers](#)

Question 10

Police may arrest traders and block smuggling routes, but the profits for rogue pharmacists keep growing regardless. Fattening pills are poured into the black market, deemed to be the lesser evil. Sudan isn't the only African society where being overweight is a symbol of prosperity and power, boosting the "marriageability" of young women. But in this country, it embodies an ideal. It defines the ultimate Sudanese woman – full-bodied and light-skinned – epitomising beauty and coveted as a wife. The iconic status of Nada Algalaa, a Sudanese singer whose looks are widely praised and emulated, is testament in itself. For some women, it is an ideal to be acquired by any means necessary.

7. Being overweight is a sign of prosperity and power throughout African countries.

[/restrict]