

B. READING

Exercise 1 :

To be successful in the IELTS Reading test it is important to understand how paragraphs are written and used.

Read the statements. Are they True or False? Choose the correct answers.

1 In English, long passages are usually divided up into paragraphs.

☐ True ☐ False

2 Paragraphs are always one long sentence.

☐ True ☐ False

3 Paragraphs always have headings.

☐ True ☐ False

4 A paragraph should have one main topic.

☐ True ☐ False

5 A paragraph usually has one sentence which explains the topic of the paragraph.

☐ True ☐ False

Exercise 2 :

Read the title of the Reading passage and the paragraph headings (i–iii). What is the passage about? Choose the correct answers to complete the sentences.

The annual Busójárás celebration

- | |
|--|
| i Rituals that have continued to the present day
ii A connection between the carnival and historical events
iii The effect of the things people wear during the carnival |
|--|

1 The topic of the Reading passage is likely to be about a traditional festival/ people's everyday habit.

2 The writer will explain why the celebration is no longer popular/ is still popular.

3 The celebration might involve people dressed in special clothes/ people using special equipment.

Exercise 3 :

Read the information. Then look at the paragraph headings (i–iii) again. Choose the key information in each heading.

It is very useful to decide what the key words are in the headings. This will help you decide what you need to find when you start reading the passage.

- i Rituals that have continued to the present day
- ii A connection between the carnival and historical events
- iii The effect of the things people wear during the carnival

1 The key word in the first heading is

- ☐ rituals ☐ continued ☐ present day

2 The main idea of the second heading is

- ☐ the carnival ☐ historical events

3 The key information in the third heading is

- ☐ the things people wear ☐ people and carnival

Exercise 4 :

Read the information. Then match the words and phrases in the box with the underlined key words in the headings.

After you have decided what the key words are in a heading, you can then scan (look quickly for details) the paragraph for any words or phrases that match those key words.

- i Rituals that have continued to the present day
- ii A connection between the carnival and historical events
- iii The effect of the things people wear during the carnival

masks

a famous battle

people from the town hold hands and dance

set on fire

a man-like figure is constructed

cloaks

managed to repel the invaders

costumes

the man is paraded

rituals

historical events

things people wear

Exercise 5 :

Read the information. Then match the paragraph headings with the paragraphs.

In the IELTS Reading test, you may be asked to match headings with paragraphs.

First, it is a good idea to pay attention to any key words in the headings. Then, look at the paragraphs quickly, to find out what kind of information they contain. Next, read each paragraph in detail and decide which heading fits best.

The annual Busójárás celebration

Agnes Kovacs travels to a small Hungarian town to witness a local festival that has entertained people for hundreds of years

A The costumes are intentionally frightening. Several people walk around the square of the small town wearing masks. The faces are red, with small eyes and large pointed teeth. Then, there are the horns. In some of the costumes, they look like goat's horns. Other masks have bull's horns. The people wear huge cloaks made of sheepskin, which make them look bigger than they really are. With the sticks and rattles they carry to make noise with, they look like monsters.

B This carnival has been a tradition in southern Hungary for several centuries. The town of Mohács was the site of a famous battle between the Hungarians and the Ottoman Empire 500 years ago. The Turkish army was far superior at the time and would eventually overrun most of Hungary. However, the small town of Mohács managed to repel the invaders, albeit briefly.

Legend has it that the townspeople dressed up as monsters and managed to drive away the Turks.

C The carnival is a celebration of continued life and combines historical events with ancient traditions of chasing away the winter darkness. It is held at the end of each winter and, as in many other winter festivals around Europe, a man-like figure is constructed from straw. On the final night of the carnival, the man is paraded through the town and set on fire. People from the town hold hands and dance around the burning man until dawn.

i Rituals that have continued to the present day

ii A connection between the carnival and historic events

iii The effect of the things people wear during the carnival

1 Paragraph A

2 Paragraph B

3 Paragraph C

Exercise 6: Read the information. Then read the headings and decide which words are the key words. Choose the correct answers.

With IELTS Reading matching headings tasks, the headings will always summarise the paragraphs. So it makes sense to look at them first before you look at the whole Reading passage. Try to spend no more than one or two minutes doing this. At this point, you only need to get a general idea of what the Reading passage is likely to be about.



List of Headings

- i The role of the Matariki in bringing different generations of people together
☐ role ☐ Matariki ☐ bringing ☐ different ☐ generations ☐ together
- ii Different ancient legends told in New Zealand about how the Matariki were created
☐ ancient ☐ legends ☐ New Zealand ☐ how ☐ Matariki ☐ created
- iii The possibility of the Matariki replacing traditional national holidays
☐ possibility ☐ Matariki ☐ traditional ☐ national ☐ holidays
- iv Current interest in a craft once commonly associated with celebrating Matariki
☐ interest ☐ craft ☐ celebrating
- v The importance of the Matariki as a navigational tool in the past
☐ importance ☐ navigational ☐ tool ☐ past
- vi Other cultures' legends about the origin of the seven stars
☐ legends ☐ origin ☐ stars
- vii The Matariki's influence on customs associated with agriculture
☐ influence ☐ customs ☐ agriculture
- viii The decline and later revival of the celebration of Matariki
☐ decline ☐ revival ☐ celebration ☐ Matariki

ix The kind of traditional dishes guests can expect to receive during Matariki

☐ traditional ☐ dishes ☐ guests ☐ receive

x A strategy for locating the formation of the stars that make up the Matariki

☐ strategy ☐ locating ☐ formation ☐ stars ☐ make

Exercise 7: Read the information. Then do the IELTS Reading task.

The text has seven paragraphs, A–G. Choose the correct heading for each paragraph and move it into the gap. You do not need to use all the headings.

- You have already looked through the headings. Now, read the title and look quickly over the paragraphs to get a general idea of what the passage is about.
- Read the first paragraph and decide which headings might fit and which do not.
- Read the first paragraph again in more detail and choose the one heading that fits best.
- Do the same for the other paragraphs. If you have any time at the end, check your answers. If you have the same answer for two paragraphs, you need to look again!

The meaning and celebration of Matariki

Henry Wilkes travels to New Zealand to investigate an ancient Māori tradition

A Over the cliffs at Mission Bay in Auckland, New Zealand, an incredible number of kites give extra colour to the cold blue sky. It is no coincidence that so many people have gathered here to fly them; they have come together to celebrate the arrival of the Matariki, the group of seven stars that appear in mid-winter. Many of the kite fliers are Māori, descendants of the people who first arrived in New Zealand in the 13th century, but others have European ancestors, or are recent immigrants to this country. What all of them have in common is that they are keen to take part in the celebration, and a key part of this is the designing and making of a kite. The Māori used to make them out of pampas grass, flax and the bark of the mulberry tree, and would often decorate them with shells or feathers. Nowadays, although it is easy enough to make a modern plastic kite, people prefer to follow their customs and use traditional methods and materials.

B Before the Europeans began to arrive and settle in New Zealand, festivities associated with the Matariki were popular amongst all Māori tribes. They gradually began to disappear, eventually coming to an end with the last traditional festival held in the 1940s. It wasn't until the beginning of the 21st century that people began calling in large numbers for Matariki to be brought back as a cultural event. In 2000, around 500 people attended a community gathering and public firework display in Hastings, New Zealand, to mark the return of Matariki. This year, over 20,000 people are expected to participate in the same event. And around the rest of New Zealand, other similar events are co-ordinated.

C Māori have several stories about the origins of the Matariki. One is connected to their creation myth, in which the god of the weather and winds threw his eyes into the heavens, where they became the seven stars. In another version, the god of the forests, Tāne Mahuta, became jealous of a very bright star which everyone admired. He angrily threw the star to destroy it but instead it broke up into seven smaller stars. In a third myth, the main star is a mother and the six smaller ones are her daughters. Regardless of the origins, Māori communities have traditionally celebrated in similar ways.

D Although Māori living in New Zealand recognise January 1st as the official start of the year, it is the appearance of the Matariki which traditionally marks the beginning of the Māori New Year. Of course, people living in different parts of the world will be able to see the cluster of seven stars at different times of year. However, for New Zealanders hoping to see the Matariki, they should keep an eye out from the second week of June. If they look towards the north-east horizon, slightly to the west of where the sun rises, they should have a good chance of spotting it in the tail of the Milky Way. Of course, it is best to get up an hour before dawn, so the stars are bright enough to be easily noticed. A pair of binoculars can come in handy, too.

E Like the first people to settle in Tonga, Samoa, Niue, the Cook Islands, Hawaii and Tahiti, the Māori were great sailors. All these Polynesian peoples were able to travel long distances over water by observing the position of the stars. The seven stars that made up the Matariki were especially useful due to the fact that they changed position during the year, showing a clear direction for the huge traditional canoes to follow. It's easy to see the common ancestry of the people of Polynesia when you look at the names for the Matariki in the different countries: it is *Matali'i* in Samoa, *Makali'i* in Hawaii, and *Mataliki* in Tonga, for example.

F Nowadays, as in the past, Matariki celebrations provide an excellent opportunity for communities to unite. It is a time when people reflect on the experiences of the year which has just passed, give thanks for the good things they have received from the land and the sea, and look forward to the year ahead. It is also the perfect time for older members of the extended family or local tribe to share their knowledge with the young. They may teach them traditional songs or stories, demonstrate old ways of fishing or catching eels, or show them how to prepare *hangi* (food which is cooked on heated stones in a hole in the ground). For many Māori children, this contact and experience gives them a strong sense of cultural identity and belonging.

G While Māori arts such as carving and weaving were practised during Matariki celebrations in the past, the arrival of the seven stars had another significant role. Māori decided when to plant their crops according to how easily the stars could be seen. If they were clear and bright, Māori believed that the growing season would be a productive one, and they would plant their crops in September. But if they appeared to be out-of-focus and closer together than usual, they knew that the winter was going to be an extremely cold one. This meant they wouldn't start planting until October. But Matariki also occurred at harvest time, so there was plenty of food to share around between family members and visitors. This kind of feasting is still very much part of the modern celebrations.

ii Different ancient legends told in New Zealand about how the Matariki were created

iii The possibility of the Matariki replacing traditional national holidays

iv Current interest in a craft once commonly associated with celebrating Matariki

ix The kind of traditional dishes guests can expect to receive during Matariki

i The role of the Matariki in bringing different generations of people together

vi Other cultures' legends about the origin of the seven stars

vii The Matariki's influence on customs associated with agriculture

viii The decline and later revival of the celebration of Matariki

v The importance of the Matariki as a navigational tool in the past

x A strategy for locating the formation of the stars that make up the Matariki

Paragraph A

Paragraph B

Paragraph C

Paragraph D

Paragraph E

Paragraph F

Paragraph G