

TASK TYPE 4 Matching Headings

IELTS PRACTICE TASK

Questions 1–5

The Reading Passage has five paragraphs, A–E.

Choose the correct heading for each paragraph from the list of headings below.

Write the correct number, i–vii, below.

List of headings

- i How one mall has promoted itself over the years
- ii Reasons for government support of malls
- iii Ongoing research into the psychology of shoppers
- iv How malls have gone in and out of fashion
- v How different countries interpret malls in new ways
- vi The ideas behind the original malls
- vii The influence one type of shop has had on malls

- 1 Paragraph A
- 2 Paragraph B
- 3 Paragraph C
- 4 Paragraph D
- 5 Paragraph E

Shop till you drop!

The rise and rise of the shopping mall?

A

Today, shopping malls are found in almost every nation, in both the developed and developing world. Visitors to any city, from Auckland to Washington, and Beijing to Jogjakarta, can expect to find shopping malls in the suburban centres, and all of them will appear to be broadly similar. So it's easy to forget that malls are actually a relatively recent development. The first suburban shopping malls as we would recognise them today only started to be built in America in the 1950s, and in most of the rest of the world in the decades after that as the craze for mall shopping went global. But 50 or so years on, while malls are still an important part of the retail economy, mall owners have little to celebrate as increased competition from the Internet means fewer and fewer people walk into their air-conditioned halls. In the U.S.A, few if any new malls have opened since 2006, and those already operating are having to work harder and harder to attract customers.

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B

One of the first indoor 'shopping centres' was the Cleveland Arcade, built in the late nineteenth century. However, this was an inner city shopping venue without parking and cannot really be considered the forebear of today's malls which didn't appear until much later and in response to a new feature of urban development. Their invention is usually credited to an Austrian-born U.S. immigrant, who hated suburban living, seeing it as essentially 'empty' and lacking any focal point. His solution was to try to recreate in the suburbs the same compact shopping experience as was found in city centres – the shopping mall, a town square for the suburbs, but one with plentiful parking for the increasingly car-dominated culture of the 1950s.

C

It would be a mistake, however, to assume that consumers have always flocked to malls on impulse without any effort being made to entice them. In fact, if my own local mall is any guide, these institutions have always found it necessary to publicise themselves and actively seek customers. In the 1960s my local mall ran a variety of publicity events such as beauty pageants, fashion parades and even a bed-making competition. More recently these events have focussed on appearances by minor celebrities, aspiring singers, unemployed actors, and discarded contestants from the latest television reality series. So it's apparent that malls have never taken their customers for granted and have always been prepared to lure them away from alternative shopping venues.

D

While malls come in a variety of shapes and sizes, they nearly always contain at least one supermarket, and it is arguably this store that is the crucial component of any mall: the necessity of buying groceries draws customers in, and thereafter they may well be persuaded to purchase non-essential items from some of the other stores on site. What's more, the whole mall enterprise has learned a great deal from supermarkets, which have always led the field in understanding the shopper's mind. Studies conducted since the 1960s have established certain fixed principles to apply to supermarket design: essential items are spread throughout the shop, forcing customers to walk down every aisle, where they might be tempted into an unplanned purchase; chocolate and sweets are placed at child's eye level at the checkouts, and so on. The potential for all shops to exploit consumers in similar ways is one that mall designers have been quick to recognise.

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E

These days it's not an understatement to say that malls extensively spy on their customers in order to better understand their shopping habits. This, of course, is justified in terms of 'better meeting customer needs', but it also has the fortunate by-product of increasing sales. Cameras are commonly used in numerous malls around the world, not just for security purposes but also to monitor shoppers' behaviour so as to learn how to exploit it. It's commonplace today for business schools to conduct these sorts of studies, to record how long shoppers spend in every store, which goods they inspect, what they try on and whether or not they ask for assistance. This way, according to marketers, real-time shopping in actual stores will always be more popular than internet-based alternatives.