

IELTS Academic Reading Practice Test 1

Cambridge-style format | Original practice material

Time allowed: 60 minutes

Instructions: Read the three passages and answer Questions 1-40. Write your answers on the lines provided.

Reading Passage 1

The secret work of city trees

In many cities, trees are valued mainly for their beauty. Yet urban trees do far more than decorate streets and parks. They reduce the temperature of the air around them, filter dust from traffic, and soften the sound of busy roads. Researchers in several countries have found that shaded streets can be several degrees cooler than nearby streets without trees. This cooling effect is strongest during hot afternoons, when pavement and building walls absorb heat and slowly release it back into the air.

Trees also influence water. After a heavy storm, rainwater can rush quickly across concrete and into drainage systems. Leaves and roots slow this movement, allowing more water to soak into the soil. As a result, some floodwater is delayed rather than lost. For city planners, this makes trees a practical part of water management, not simply a decorative feature.

However, not every tree survives city life. Roots may be damaged by construction, soil can be compacted by foot traffic, and limited space may prevent a tree from growing into a healthy shape. Because of this, specialists now recommend choosing tree species that tolerate pollution, dry soil, and restricted root space. They also advise planting young trees in wider pits with protective barriers so that underground cables and paving stones do not harm them.

The benefits of urban trees are greatest when they are maintained over many years. Watering young trees during dry months, pruning broken branches, and replacing dead specimens all require time and money. Even so, many cities consider this investment worthwhile. A single mature tree may not solve all environmental problems, but a well-designed tree network can make neighbourhoods healthier, quieter, and more pleasant to live in.

Questions 1-6

Do the following statements agree with the information given in Reading Passage 1?

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

1. City trees can help make nearby streets cooler.

2. Researchers say trees only improve the look of a city.
3. Tree roots can help reduce the speed of storm water.
4. All tree species are suitable for city centres.
5. Young trees need less care than mature trees.
6. The writer believes urban trees are useful but not a complete solution.

Questions 7-10

Choose the correct letter, A, B, C or D.

7. What happens on hot afternoons according to researchers?

- A. Buildings cool the surrounding air.
- B. Pavements and walls release stored heat.
- C. Trees stop absorbing sunlight.
- D. Drainage systems become blocked.

8. What do leaves and roots do after heavy rain?

- A. They increase soil erosion.
- B. They stop rain from reaching the ground.
- C. They slow the movement of water.
- D. They remove all floodwater immediately.

9. Why do planners choose certain tree species?

- A. To avoid damage from pollution and dry soil.
- B. To make streets narrower.
- C. To replace all city roads.
- D. To grow fruit for markets.

10. What is mentioned as part of tree maintenance?

- A. Painting tree trunks every year
- B. Watering young trees in dry periods

C. Cutting down older trees

D. Removing all surrounding buildings

Questions 11-13

Complete the summary below.

Write NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS from the passage for each answer.

Urban trees offer several benefits. They can lower air temperature and reduce noise from traffic. They also help manage storm water by slowing its movement into the 11. _____. To survive in cities, trees must cope with pollution, dry soil and limited 12. _____. Although maintenance costs time and money, many cities believe the long-term 13. _____ is worthwhile.

Reading Passage 2

Why sleep matters for memory

Most people know that sleep helps the body recover, but scientists have also shown that it plays a major role in memory. During sleep, the brain does not simply rest. Instead, it organises information collected during the day. Some details are strengthened, while others are allowed to fade. This process is especially important after learning something new.

Researchers studying students found that those who slept soon after revising a lesson remembered more than those who stayed awake for several hours. The effect was strongest when sleep was regular and uninterrupted. Short naps were helpful too, although they could not replace a full night of rest. Scientists believe that sleep gives the brain time to transfer information from short-term storage to long-term memory.

Sleep also affects attention. People who are tired are more likely to make mistakes, forget instructions, or lose track of a task. In classrooms and workplaces, this can lead to lower performance and slower reaction times. For this reason, experts advise maintaining a steady bedtime, limiting bright screens before sleep, and keeping the bedroom quiet and cool.

The message from recent research is clear: good sleep is not a luxury. It supports learning, protects concentration, and helps the brain organise facts more efficiently.

Questions 14-25

Complete the sentences below.

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

14. Sleep helps the body recover and also plays a major role in _____.

15. During sleep, the brain organises information collected _____.

16. Some details are strengthened while others are allowed to _____.

17. Students who slept soon after revising remembered more than those who stayed awake for several _____ .
18. The effect was strongest when sleep was regular and _____ .
19. Short naps were helpful, but they could not replace a full night of _____ .
20. Scientists believe sleep transfers information from short-term storage to _____ .
21. Tired people are more likely to make _____ .
22. Tired people may forget instructions or lose track of a _____ .
23. In classrooms and workplaces, poor sleep can lead to lower performance and slower _____ .
24. Experts advise keeping the bedroom quiet and _____ .
25. Good sleep supports learning, protects concentration, and helps the brain organise facts more _____ .

Reading Passage 3

Shared repair workshops

In many towns, small repair workshops have appeared in libraries, community centres, and converted shopfronts. These workshops provide tools, spare parts, and advice so that people can repair broken household items instead of throwing them away. The idea is not new, but it has become more popular as consumers have begun to question the speed with which modern products are replaced.

A typical workshop may offer help with torn clothing, faulty lamps, bicycles, toasters, or toys. The process is usually simple: a visitor explains the problem, a volunteer suggests possible causes, and the owner is encouraged to take part in the repair. Supporters argue that this hands-on approach helps people learn practical skills and reduces dependence on professional services for minor faults.

One city survey found that repaired items were often cheaper to keep than to replace, particularly when the original problem was small. The survey also found that many visitors valued the social side of the experience. They enjoyed meeting neighbours, sharing advice, and seeing repair as a community activity rather than a solitary chore. Some workshops have even become informal meeting places where people exchange news while waiting for a job to be finished.

Yet repair workshops face challenges. Modern products are sometimes designed in ways that make them difficult to open or fix. In addition, volunteers need training, insurance, and space to store tools safely. For this reason, successful workshops often work in partnership with local councils or charities. They also keep detailed records so they can show how many items are repaired and how much waste is avoided. These records help them demonstrate that repair is not just an old-fashioned habit, but a practical response to modern waste.

Questions 26-33

Choose the correct letter, A, B, C or D.

26. Where can repair workshops be found?

- A. Only in factories
- B. In several public places
- C. Only in shopping malls
- D. Inside private homes

27. What is a visitor usually encouraged to do?

- A. Buy a new item immediately
- B. Wait outside
- C. Take part in the repair
- D. Leave the workshop alone

28. What does the city survey say about repairs?

- A. They always cost more than replacement
- B. They are often cheaper for small problems
- C. They are only useful for toys
- D. They take too much time to matter

29. What social benefit do visitors value?

- A. Winning prizes
- B. Meeting neighbours
- C. Travelling to another city
- D. Learning to sell products

30. What problem do workshops face?

- A. Too many repairs are impossible to complete
- B. Products can be hard to open or fix
- C. Volunteers refuse to talk to people

D. There are no broken items to repair

31. What do successful workshops often do?

A. Work with councils or charities

B. Avoid keeping records

C. Charge high fees

D. Stop using tools

32. Why do workshops keep records?

A. To prove repair is wasteful

B. To show how much waste is reduced

C. To list every volunteer's name

D. To advertise new products

33. What does the passage suggest about repair workshops?

A. They are an outdated habit

B. They are a practical response to waste

C. They will replace all shops

D. They are mainly for children

Questions 34-40

Complete the summary below.

Write NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS from the passage for each answer.

Repair workshops help people fix household items instead of buying new ones. They support practical learning and encourage a sense of 34. _____. Visitors often enjoy meeting neighbours, while the workshops themselves may need training, insurance, and safe 35. _____ for tools. To succeed, many workshops cooperate with local councils or charities and record the number of items repaired and the amount of 36. _____ avoided. This helps them show that repair is a practical response to modern 37. _____. The idea has become more popular because consumers question how quickly products are 38. _____. Repair also reduces dependence on professional services for 39. _____ faults. Overall, the workshops provide advice, tools, and 40. _____.