

UNIT 3 : THE NEWS AND MEDIA

A. GRAMMAR & VOCABULARY

Exercise 1: Complete the sentences. Use the words in the box.

breaking news	bulletin	headlines	interview	news flash
notifications	round-the-clock reporting	scandal		

- 1 I don't usually read the newspaper – I just look at the _____ to see if anything important has happened.
- 2 I was watching a film on TV when suddenly the film was interrupted by a _____. Apparently, there's a bad storm heading towards our region.
- 3 These days, TV news channels have to provide _____. In other words, they have to report the news 24 hours a day.
- 4 I read a really interesting _____ with a former politician in yesterday's newspaper. The interviewer asked lots of really difficult questions and the politician didn't know what to say.
- 5 I've got an app on my phone that sends me _____ of the most important news stories. I can then click on the link to read the full story.
- 6 That's all for today's programme. The next news _____ is at ten o'clock.
- 7 Now we've got some _____ for you. We've just heard that the prime minister is in hospital after a skiing accident.
- 8 There was a shocking story about a tennis player secretly being paid a lot of money to lose an important match. It's a real _____.

Exercise 2: Choose the correct words to complete the text.

What are the main opinions/ sources/ summaries of news? Where do journalists get their stories from? Well, there's always an element of personal interviewing/ reporting/ researching i.e. seeing things with your own eyes and describing what you see. In the same way, journalists interview a lot of articles/ reporters/ witnesses to events, to find out what happened from the people who actually saw it happening. Journalists can also find their own news stories, through investigation, where they do a lot of research to cause/ discover/ effect something completely new. They can also find out useful information from account/ reaction/ social media sites. It's fair to say that a large number of news stories are provided by businesses and other organisations as press archives/ images/ releases. Organisations also hold press conferences, where a large number of journalists are invited to listen to important discussions/ radion/ statements and then ask questions.

Exercise 3: Complete the sentences. Use the verbs in the box.

comment

follow

interview

release

report

research

stay

update

- 1 I'd love to be a TV journalist so I could travel around the world and [] on all the big events, as they happen.
- 2 Last month, I tried to [] a famous film star about her latest film, but she didn't want to answer any of my questions.
- 3 So, that's all we know at the moment, but we'll [] you on this breaking news as soon as we have more information.
- 4 I try to [] up to date with news and current affairs, so I always watch news programmes on TV.
- 5 Our reporter spent six months trying to [] the story behind the scandal. You can watch his full report later this evening.
- 6 I don't really [] all the latest celebrity news. I don't think it's important to know what famous people are doing all the time.
- 7 Whenever I read an interesting news story online, I always [] on it. I think it's important to give my own opinion, not just to read other people's.
- 8 The company says it will [] a statement shortly to explain why it took this action.

Exercise 4: Answer the questions. Use the phrases in the box.

Business news

Editorial section

Entertainment news

Lifestyle section

Local news

Review section

Sports news

The main story

1 Where could you find news about your favourite sports team?

2 Where could you read stories and advice about things like fashion, cooking and gardening?

3 Where could you find news about music, TV, films, etc.?

4 Where could you find news about finance, economics and companies?

5 Where could you find news about your own town or city?

6 Where could you find the most important news of the day?

7 Where could you read journalists' own opinions and comments about news stories?

8 Where could you find out whether new books, films and music are good or bad?

Exercise 5: Choose the correct words to complete the sentences.

1 It's good to make notes during an interview, then to make/pick/write them up afterwards.

2 Why are the newspapers full of bad news? I need some good news to catch/cheer/turn me up!

3 I didn't plan to watch the news today, but the first news story was really interesting and ended/followed/went up watching the whole programme.

4 I always watch the TV news in the morning, and then I catch/stay/write up on the news during the day on my phone.

5 Did you hear/hold/see any interesting news from those celebrities you met?

6 Do you really think all those stories are true, or do the newspapers just cheer/do/make them up?

Exercise 6: Read the information. Then choose the correct reason for using the passive in each sentence.

We often use the passive (e.g. *something is / was done*):

- to make our language sound more formal
- to show a link between the end of one sentence and the beginning of the next
- to describe impersonal or technical processes
- when the agent (the person or thing that did the action) isn't known
- when the agent isn't important to the story – for example, because we can easily work out who it is
- when we don't want to say who the agent is
- when we want to draw special attention to the agent. We use *by* before the agent and put it at the end of the sentence
- when the agent is a process or event, such as a storm or an accident. We often introduce this type of agent with *in*.

1 The office **was broken into** at around midnight.

- ☐ The agent isn't known.
- ☐ To show a link between the end of one sentence and the beginning of the next.

2 The thief **was arrested** in the early hours of this morning.

- ☐ The agent is an event, not a person.
- ☐ The agent isn't important (we can work out that the agent was the police).

3 I'm afraid some incorrect information **was given** at our last press conference.

- ☐ The speaker is describing a process, so there's no need to mention people.
- ☐ We don't want to say who the agent is.

4 The police are investigating the theft of a priceless painting. It **was stolen** from an art gallery last night.

- ☐ To show a link between the end of one sentence and the beginning of the next.
- ☐ The agent isn't important to the story (we can work out that the agent was the burglars).

5 Thank you for your help. It **is greatly appreciated**.

- ☐ We don't want to say who the agent is.
- ☐ To sound more formal.

6 The event **was attended** by over three thousand students.

- ☐ The agent is an event.
- ☐ To draw special attention to the agent (i.e. the students).

7 The house **was damaged** in a storm.

- ☐ The agent was an event, not a person.
- ☐ To sound more formal.

Exercise 7: Choose the correct passive forms to complete the sentences.

- 1 These days, fewer newspapers are being bought/ was bought/ is bought, as more people get their news from free news websites.
- 2 The cause of the accident had been known/ was known/ isn't known, but the police are investigating it at the moment.
- 3 The good thing about online newspapers is that they're updated/ they've been updated/ they were updated all the time, unlike print newspapers.
- 4 When is the photograph taken/ was the photograph being taken/ was the photograph taken?
- 5 The politician spoke about her political opponent while she has been interviewed/ is being interviewed/ was being interviewed by a journalist live on TV.
- 6 Don't worry – you can speak honestly. This interview isn't recorded/ isn't being recorded/ was recorded.

Exercise 8: Read the information. Then rewrite the sentences in the passive, using *It is/was* + past participle + *that*. The first question has been done for you.

Use the structure *It is/was* + past participle + *that* ... (e.g. *It is believed that* ...) to create passive sentences.

Remember to change the order of the structure in questions (e.g. *When was it made?* NOT *When it was made?*).

Don't include the agent (the person or thing that did the action).

- 1 The police think that the man was responsible for several similar robberies last year.

It was thought that the man was responsible for several similar robberies last year.

- 2 We hoped that some witnesses might come forward, but so far, nobody has approached us.

_____ come forward, but so far, nobody has approached us.

- 3 We understand that someone will release a statement soon.

_____ a statement soon.

- 4 People don't often say that politicians have a sense of humour, but this story shows that some politicians can be funny.

_____ a sense of humour, but this story shows that some politicians can be funny.

- 5 Why did the reporter announce that the factory is staying open, when in fact it's going to close?

Why _____ open, when in fact, it's going to close?

Exercise 9: Read the active sentences. Then complete the passive sentences. You might have to change the form of some of the words. The first question has been done for you.

1 ACTIVE: A fire completely destroyed a local factory last night.

PASSIVE: A local factory was completely destroyed last night in a fire.

2 ACTIVE: Several witnesses in nearby houses heard the noise.

PASSIVE: _____ by several witnesses in nearby houses.

3 ACTIVE: Fortunately, the fire didn't kill anybody.

PASSIVE: Fortunately, _____ in the fire.

4 ACTIVE: However, flying glass cut three security guards.

PASSIVE: However, _____ by flying glass.

5 ACTIVE: People are still investigating the cause of the fire.

PASSIVE: _____ investigated.

6 ACTIVE: However, people are treating it as an accident, not a crime.

PASSIVE: However, _____ as an accident, not a crime.

7 ACTIVE: One possibility is that an electrical fault inside the factory caused the fire.

PASSIVE: One possibility is _____ inside the factory.

8 ACTIVE: The police advise members of the public to stay away from the scene of the fire.

PASSIVE: _____ to stay away from the scene of the fire.

Exercise 10: Read the information. Then choose the correct words or phrases to complete the text.

Using time markers

First, firstly, at first, etc.

- We use *firstly / secondly / thirdly / finally*, etc. to put a series of events in order: e.g. *There are three things you need to do. **Firstly**, you need to do X. **Secondly**, you need to do Y. **Finally**, you need to do Z.*
- We can use *first* (or *first of all*) instead of *firstly*: e.g. ***First** (of all), you need to do X.*
- We use *at first* to describe what was true at the beginning, before it changed later: e.g. ***At first**, there were only a few people. But more and more people arrived during the day.*
- We can use *first* between the subject and verb to describe the beginning of a process or the first time something happened: e.g. *I **first** met her when we were students, but we've met many times since then.*

At the end / in the end

- We use *at the end* to describe the last part of an event: e.g. ***At the end** (of the party), everyone went home.*
- We use *in the end* to describe the final (and perhaps unexpected) results: e.g. *We were really worried about his illness, but **in the end** he made a full recovery.*

While, during, meanwhile

- After *while*, we need a clause (subject + verb): e.g. ***While we were** at the meeting, I checked my emails.*
- It's also possible to have an *-ing* clause after *while*: e.g. ***While waiting**, I checked my emails (= While I was waiting ...).*
- After *during*, we need a noun phrase: e.g. ***During the meeting**, I checked my emails.*
- We usually use *meanwhile* to connect two separate sentences: e.g. *He gave a really boring presentation at the meeting. **Meanwhile**, I checked my emails.*

When the robbery of a local museum was first/ firstly/ while reported, nobody paid it much attention. At first/ first/ secondly, it was thought that nothing valuable was missing. However, it was later discovered that some valuable coins were missing. During/ Meanwhile/ While a recent press conference, an expert was asked what the thieves might do with the coins. She suggested three possibilities: at first/ firstly/ in the end, the thieves might try to sell the coins to a collector. This was considered to be rather unlikely, as it would be easy to find the coins. Meanwhile/ second/ secondly, they might melt the coins and sell the gold from them. This was also thought to be unlikely, as the gold would be worth a lot less than the coins themselves. At the end/ Finally/ Last, the coins might be sent abroad for sale in another country. This was seen as the most likely case.

During/ Meanwhile/ While, the police have released a statement, announcing that they have a good idea who the thieves are. "We are confident that we will catch them at the end/ finally/ in the end, even if it takes months, and we will return the coins to the museum," the statement said.

B. READING

Exercise 1 : Read the information. Then read the sentences below. What is the writer doing in each sentence? Choose the best options.

In the IELTS Reading test, you might need to find the part of the Reading passage where the writer is doing something (for example, giving a reason, challenging an idea or comparing something).

1. Many people wonder if it is worth spending a huge amount of money on space exploration. This is a sensible question, although we should also consider the benefits that space research has given us in terms of the technological advancements that have been made. [challenging an idea/ comparing things/ giving a reason]
2. NASA's annual budget is approximately \$17.5 billion. This sounds like a huge amount of money – and it is – until you realise that Americans spend nearly twice that amount on pizza each year. [challenging an idea/ comparing things/ giving a reason]
3. Some historians believe that the USSR and the USA were in a 'race' to develop rocket systems, weapons and satellite technology. This is why conquering space, putting humans in orbit and on the moon, became an important goal in the latter half of the 20th century. [challenging an idea/ comparing things/ giving a reason]

Exercise 2 : Skim read the paragraphs. Match the summaries with the paragraphs. There is one extra summary that you do not need

Remember that in the IELTS Reading test, you should spend a few minutes skim reading the passage in order to get a general idea of what each paragraph is about.

Space tourism

A Space exploration is important. Apart from the fact that it inspires whole new generations of young scientists, it helps us understand our environment and has given us a perspective on the world in which we live. Mostly, space travel has been restricted to military or scientific exploration, but this is now changing. Now there is a growing space tourism industry, which enables people to pay money to achieve their dreams of leaving the Earth.

B Space tourism is not yet a realistic possibility for most people, although there have been commercial flights into space for a few lucky people over the past few decades. In fact, the very first space tourist, Dennis Tito, travelled to the International Space Station as long ago as 2001. Since then, six other fee-paying astronauts have made the trip into space. The explanation for why it was possible for these visitors to have the privilege to leave the Earth, of course, is that they paid enormous sums of money. For his seven days and 22 hours in space, Dennis Tito is reported to have paid \$20 million.

C At present, there are several business ventures planning to launch commercial flights to the edge of space, and specially designed vehicles to enable this are being created. Although these do not plan to take tourists away from the Earth's atmosphere, they do offer the chance to travel on board a suborbital flight reaching altitudes of up to 160 kilometres and moving at over 1.4 kilometres per second. This would offer customers the experience of seeing a dark sky filled with stars, as well as a stunning view of the planet Earth below. Tickets would cost in the region of \$200,000 per trip, which would be a bargain compared to the fee Dennis Tito had to pay. However, the trips would be a lot shorter, offering only a few minutes of weightlessness before returning back to the ground, instead of seven days in outer space.

D So, it is possible that space tourism could one day become achievable and affordable for many people. However, although a journey into space (or the edge of it) would be a rewarding, once-in-a-lifetime experience for the lucky few, space travel could have widespread drawbacks for the rest of us. According to a study carried out by NASA, a large number of suborbital launches would inevitably release a significant amount of carbon dioxide into the higher levels of the Earth's atmosphere. This alone could cause large-scale disruption to the planet's climate, increasing temperatures globally and disrupting the ozone layer.

Current developments in the space tourism industry

The benefits and opportunities of space travel

The harmful consequences of space tourism

The number of people who have paid to travel to space

The poor value that trips into space offer compared to their cost

1 Paragraph A

2 Paragraph B

3 Paragraph C

4 Paragraph D

Exercise 3: Read the information, then read the paragraphs again. Which paragraph contains the following information? Choose the correct answers.

- 1 a comparison between two different amounts of time

- ☐ A
☐ B
☐ C
☐ D

Read the questions carefully and decide which paragraph probably contains the information. Then read that paragraph carefully to check if the information is there.

- 2 a challenge to the idea that space tourism is worthwhile

- ☐ A
☐ B
☐ C
☐ D

- 3 a reason why certain people could achieve something

- ☐ A
☐ B
☐ C
☐ D

Exercise 4 : Read the information. Then look at questions 1–3 and choose the sentence from each paragraph that contains the answer.

The information you need to find is located in one key sentence in each paragraph. Notice that the words in the questions are often very similar in meaning to the ones in the paragraphs.

1 a reason why certain people could achieve something

Paragraph B

- ☐ Space tourism is not yet a realistic possibility for most people, although there have been commercial flights into space for a few lucky people over the past few decades.
- ☐ In fact, the very first space tourist, Dennis Tito, travelled to the International Space Station as long ago as 2001.
- ☐ Since then, six other fee-paying astronauts have made the trip into space.
- ☐ The explanation for why it was possible for these visitors to have the privilege to leave the Earth, of course, is that they paid enormous sums of money.
- ☐ For his seven days and 22 hours in space, Dennis Tito is reported to have paid \$20 million.

2 a comparison between two different amounts of time

Paragraph C

- ☐ At present, there are several business ventures planning to launch commercial flights to the edge of space, and specially designed vehicles to enable this are being created.
- ☐ Although these do not plan to take tourists away from the Earth's atmosphere, they do offer the chance to travel on board a suborbital flight reaching altitudes of up to 160 kilometres and moving at over 1.4 kilometres per second.
- ☐ This would offer customers the experience of seeing a dark sky filled with stars, as well as a stunning view of the planet Earth below.
- ☐ Tickets would cost in the region of \$200,000 per trip, which would be a bargain compared to the fee Dennis Tito had to pay.
- ☐ However, the trips would be a lot shorter, offering only a few minutes of weightlessness before returning back to the ground, instead of seven days in outer space.

3 a challenge to the idea that space tourism is worthwhile

Paragraph D

- ☐ So, it is possible that space tourism could one day become achievable and affordable for many people.
- ☐ However, although a journey into space (or the edge of it) would be a rewarding, once-in-a-lifetime experience for the lucky few, space travel could have widespread drawbacks for the rest of us.
- ☐ According to a study carried out by NASA, a large number of suborbital launches would inevitably release a significant amount of carbon dioxide into the higher levels of the Earth's atmosphere.
- ☐ This alone could cause large-scale disruption to the planet's climate, increasing temperatures globally and disrupting the ozone layer.

Exercise 5: Read the information. Then read the questions and the sentences from the paragraphs that contain the answers again. Select the words or phrases in each paragraph that match the words and phrases in bold in the questions.

1 a reason why certain people **could achieve** something

Paragraph B

The explanation for why it was possible for these visitors to have the privilege to leave the Earth, of course, was that they paid enormous sums of money.

2 a comparison between two different **amounts of time**

Paragraph C

However, the trips would be a lot shorter, offering only a few minutes of weightlessness before returning back to the ground, instead of seven days in outer space.

3 a challenge to the idea that space tourism is **worthwhile**

Paragraph D

However, although a journey into space (or the edge of it) would be a rewarding, once-in-a-lifetime experience for the lucky few, space travel could have widespread drawbacks for the rest of us.

Exercise 6: Here are some more things a writer may do. Match the descriptions with the functions.

justify something	●	●	write about a few things which are typical of something
give details	●	●	say why something is right or why something should exist
mention or make reference to something	●	●	write about something, but not in a detailed way
give examples	●	●	provide precise, factual information

Exercise 7: In this type of IELTS Reading matching information task, it is possible that you will find the answer to more than one question in the same paragraph. Read the passage again. Then decide which paragraph contains the information in questions 1–4. Choose the correct answers.

- 1 gives a justification of why space travel is useful
- 2 mentions the main types of space travel that have existed until now
- 3 gives examples of people who have paid to travel into space
- 4 gives details of flights which reach the edge of space

Exercise 8: Read the information. Then do the IELTS Reading task. The text has seven paragraphs (A–G). Which paragraph contains the following information? Choose the correct paragraph.

Try this exam task, but note that in the real IELTS Reading test there would not be as many questions in a matching information task such as this.

- Read the passage and think about the purpose or function of each paragraph (explaining, comparing, giving details, etc.).
- Look at the questions and identify the type of information you need to look for (a reason, a comparison, etc.).
- Try to match the type of information with the functions of the paragraphs.
- When you think you have identified the right paragraph, read it carefully to check that it contains all the correct information.
- Remember that the words in the question may be expressed differently in the Reading passage.
- Remember that just because you see a word from the question, it does not necessarily mean that you have found the correct paragraph.



What does it take to become an astronaut?

A What could be more thrilling than travelling through space and seeing the Earth from miles above? Becoming an astronaut used to be a typical ambition for children, but one they were unlikely ever to fulfil – it was even harder to achieve than becoming a rock star or Hollywood actor. However, since it was launched, the International Space Station (ISS) has been home to well over 200 people from 18 different countries. Although some critics complain that investing in the ISS is a poor use of billions of dollars, they should not forget that research in the unique conditions of the ISS has resulted in some incredible discoveries in medical treatments, weather science and satellite technology, which we now use on Earth. More teams are scheduled to be sent up in the future and are certain to make even more valuable contributions to humanity.

B So what are the requirements for someone wanting to work on the ISS? First, the applicant must be a citizen of the nation whose space programme they are applying for, or be willing to become one. Age is also important, mid-20s to mid-40s being the preferred range. Natural intelligence is vital, and so is achievement in such fields as engineering, biological and physical sciences, and mathematics. Candidates are nearly always from a military background, often because they already have piloting skills, but in some countries, civilians can also apply. For example, in the USA, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) considers people from a wide range of backgrounds.

C Obviously, applicants are unlikely to have previous space-travel experience when they attend an interview, but recruiters also look for qualities such as adaptability and determination. Even after an applicant has got through the first stage of the interview process, there are still other tests they have to pass. For example, if it is discovered that the quality of an applicant's eyesight is poor then, unfortunately, it's time to go home. There is a tough physical examination as well. Astronauts need to prove they are in good shape because if they are eventually chosen to go on a mission, they will have to survive long months in microgravity, something which can cause uncomfortable swelling in the arms and legs, and can affect the cardiovascular system.

D Eventually, out of all the applicants that apply, a small group is chosen to attend a two-year period of study. During this time, they will learn a whole range of new things, such as a new language (they will have to communicate with other nationalities on the ISS). They will also have media awareness lessons and special preparation in a simulated zero-gravity environment. Once they have completed these sessions, the potential astronauts may have to wait years before being chosen to go up to the ISS. In other words, they need to be willing and able to depart at any time.

E If an astronaut is lucky enough to be sent to the ISS, he or she will have plenty to keep them busy. Mostly they will be involved in scientific research, experimentation and maintaining equipment. But just as in any home, the

ISS must be kept clean. In fact, wiping and vacuuming up dirt and debris is even more important in space, as the tiny particles could cause huge problems if they got inside some of the computers or other equipment. Astronauts on board the ISS certainly report that they miss their children, their families and their friends on Earth, but few ever complain about boredom. Of course, technology makes it a lot easier to stay in touch nowadays.

F While the daily routine for an astronaut on the ISS may be little different from any other kind of job, there are many new challenges each astronaut faces when they take their first trip into space. One of these is getting used to the fact that there is no more 'night' and 'day' – at least, not in the way the astronauts have previously experienced them. In fact, astronauts on the ISS will see a sunrise, or sunset, every 45 minutes. Travelling at 17,500 miles an hour means they orbit the Earth 16 times in a normal 'day'. As a result, it means they won't know when they are supposed to sleep any more. This is one of the reasons why they need to follow the schedule that is organised for them. The schedule also tells them when they need to visit the gymnasium – which is at least once a day. If they do not exercise regularly, they will soon lose all the muscle in their legs.

G Another challenge concerns when, what and how the astronauts eat. The schedule, of course, tells them when it's time to heat up a packaged meal, some of which are now prepared especially to suit the tastes of the different nationalities amongst the crew. However, for a long time astronauts have reported that normal food loses its flavour in the ISS, and they find it harder to taste anything. Scientists think this has something to do with the fact that fluid moves to the upper body in microgravity, especially the head. This causes the tissues of the face to swell slightly and makes the nose feel blocked. This is why ISS crews often prefer really spicy food and strong flavours. If the food still isn't spicy enough, they can add salt and pepper, but these have to be squeezed out of tubes in liquid form!

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1 details of the way that the ISS moves around the planet	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 a reason why applicants are rejected early on in the recruitment process	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 an account of how a particular human sense can be affected during time spent on the ISS	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 a challenge to the idea that the funding of the ISS is wasteful	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 a justification for the fitness tests that potential astronauts have to pass	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

5 a justification for the fitness tests that potential astronauts have to pass

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

6 a mention of both specialised and routine work that is carried out on the ISS

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

7 examples of the necessary academic requirements for applicants

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

8 an explanation of why astronauts need to stick to a strict timetable in space

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

9 a comparison between different kinds of occupation

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

10 a reference to the kind of skills acquired during an astronaut training programme

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Exercise 9: Match the words and phrases from the Reading passage in the box with the words and phrases in bold used in the questions

1 details of the way that the ISS **moves around the planet**

2 a reason why applicants are **rejected** early on in the recruitment process

3 an account of how **a particular human sense** can be affected during time spent on the ISS

4 a challenge to the idea that the funding of the ISS is **wasteful**

5 a justification for the tests of **fitness** that potential astronauts have to pass

6 a mention of both specialised and **routine work** that is carried out on the ISS

7 examples of the necessary **academic requirements** for applicants

8 an explanation of why astronauts need to stick to a strict **timetable** in space

9 a comparison between **different kinds of occupation**

10 a reference to the kind of skills acquired during an astronaut **training programme**

achievement in such fields as ...

schedule

time to go home

orbit the Earth

rock star or Hollywood actor

period of study

wiping and vacuuming up dirt

taste

in good shape

a poor use of billions of dollars