

IELTS READING: SHORT-ANSWER QUESTIONS

MINI TEST 1

THE PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE

A. According to the great English lexicographer Samuel Johnson, knowledge is of two kinds. We know a subject ourselves or we know where we can find information upon it (Boswell Life vol. 2 p, 383 18 April 1775). In the information-driven world we now inhabit, the latter has assumed a much greater level of importance. It is not surprising to see people overwhelmed by the unlimited stream of information. There is simply too much of it to assimilate, and it is difficult to know what to do with the data once it is received; which brings us back to Johnson's words. But we need to add another dimension to his dictum, one which was probably true in his time, but is even more pertinent today: people need to be able to live the knowledge they acquire and not just know it or know where to find it. Our deficiency in this regard is, perhaps, the most singular failure of the modern information age.

B. Acquisitiveness is a natural human instinct. Children collect cards of footballers, or whatever is the latest fad, stamps, coins and books are targets for children and adult collectors (dike, as their basic instincts are played upon and nurtured by market forces. The desire to gather knowledge is nothing new. What is astonishing, however, is the way in which people treat the knowledge once it has been collected. It is as if the collection were an end in itself; and herein lies the great deception. We have turned the world into a large machine of information, a veritable vortex into which we are all being inexorably sucked. People beaver away amassing raw data, labouring under the misapprehension that they are doing something worthwhile when all that is really happening is the movement of information from one place to another. We should hardly be surprised that, as this becomes apparent, disillusionment and stress in the workplace are becoming sadly the all too common consequences.

Questions 1-4

Answer the questions below. Use NO MORE THAN SIX WORDS from the passage for each answer.

Write your answers next to 1-4 on your answer sheet.

1. What exactly overwhelms people? _____
2. What is the singular failure of the modern information age? _____
3. According to the author, what has the world turned into? _____
4. What are the consequences in the workplace of moving large amounts of raw data around? _____