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.

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.

TASK TYPE 4 Matching Headings

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.

IELTS PRACTICE TASK

Are germs bad?

Scientists know that bacteria make humans sick,
but research suggests some bacteria may also keep people alive.

A

The bacterium *Helicobacter pylori* (*H. pylori*) is able to live – indeed, thrive – inside the human stomach, which makes it relatively rare because the stomach is so acidic as to be an extremely hostile environment for most bacteria. *H. pylori* is shaped like a corkscrew and is three microns long – to give a sense of scale, a grain of sand is about three hundred microns long. Research has shown that over 50% of the world's population is infected by *H. pylori*, making it the most common infection of its kind among human beings. However, it would be a mistake to assume from its diminutive proportions or the fact that it occurs so frequently that the bacteria is a benign presence in the human body.

B

In the 1980s doctors realised that antibiotic medications could free the body of the bacterium and thus cure various illnesses including gastritis and stomach ulcers. At the time there was complete consensus among scientists that *H. pylori* did nothing but harm and all steps should be taken to eradicate it. One of those at the forefront of the research was Martin Blaser, professor of microbiology at New York University School of Medicine. Professor Blaser still remembers how certain the academic community was in those days about *H. pylori*. 'It was bad for us, so the idea was to get it out of our bodies, as fast as we can. I don't know of anyone who said, "We'd better think about the consequences."'

C

Professor Blaser's laboratory was ahead of the field and developed the original blood analysis techniques to identify the bacterium, and most of them are commonly in use today. But Professor Blaser has a mind that engages with a number of different intellectual activities; for example, in addition to his medical work, he helped to set up an important magazine of literary criticism in the United States. And perhaps it was this diversity of perspective that first caused him to wonder about *H. pylori*. In particular, he was curious to know how a bacterium that was as old as humans could survive in the human body if its only role was negative. As a result, Professor Blaser began to examine fresh aspects of the bacterium, such as its molecular make up and behaviour.

D

In 1998 Professor Blaser's findings appeared in the British Medical Journal. On the basis of extensive research into the subject, the paper concluded that, despite the prevailing consensus to the contrary, *H. pylori* might actually help promote human health, such as by regulating the level of acidity in the stomach. He pointed to the fact that, while the incidence of *H. pylori* is decreasing thanks to the widespread use of antibiotics, some diseases are actually becoming more common. Professor Blaser hypothesised that the bacterium occurs quite naturally in the human stomach and that the changes to the stomach's composition caused by its removal over recent decades account for today's increasing rates of diabetes, obesity and asthma. This is certainly an area of medical research worth watching over the years ahead.

Questions 1–7

The Reading Passage has four paragraphs, **A–D**.

Which paragraph contains the following information?

*Write the correct letter, **A–D**, next to each question.*

NB *You may use any letter more than once.*

1 some details of the first test to determine the presence of *H. pylori*

2 some details of a pioneering academic publication

3 the suggestion that one man's range of interests led to a new approach

4 a warning about underestimating the importance of *H. pylori*

5 an example of a medical benefit attributed to the presence of *H. pylori*

6 a comparison between *H. pylori* and a natural substance familiar to most people

7 examples of some medical problems caused by *H. pylori* being present

IELTS PRACTICE TASK

Building cities right

How do we plan and design the best urban environments?

Researchers have estimated that sometime in 2007, more than 50% of the human race lived in cities for the first time in history. In this sense then, most of us are urban dwellers: our home, the place we know best in the world, is a city. Yet despite this widespread familiarity with the urban environment, the issues involved in town planning and design are hugely complex and sometimes misunderstood, according to Dr Simon Lavers, a senior lecturer in urban planning and management at the Millennium Institute. 'I can think of no other form of design that incorporates such a broad range of factors,' he says. 'It comprises a huge number of sometimes conflicting considerations – economic, political, legal, cultural, aesthetic.' Part of the problem, Lavers believes, is that governments pass too many laws regulating design issues, leaving the planning process inflexible and bureaucratic.

'There's something very symbolic about that majority figure,' says Helene Olav, a research fellow at the Institute for Urban Affairs, referring to the fact that over 50% of people now live in cities. In fact, in many countries it's more like 80%. 'Urban life is a fundamentally human experience,' says Olav, 'but in some cities it doesn't necessarily feel like it. Urban planners need to incorporate this reality at the heart of their designs, creating urban facilities intended for all residents, whether that be galleries, museums, recreational centres, or open areas such as parks and squares.' A similar point is made by Professor Margaret Evans, a long-time advocate for tighter controls on urban planning. Too often, she argues, urban planning is geared solely towards commerce and city centres are sold into private ownership. Says Evans, 'Most cities are good at protecting their great landmarks and national monuments, but the smaller heritage sites, the homes of lesser writers or community leaders for example, which also give our cities a sense of common ancestry, are too often torn down by property developers and replaced with glass towers.'

In reality, good urban planning and design is not that hard, continues Olav. 'It's definitely possible to overthink it,' she says. 'Roads, water, sewage disposal – the unexciting but essential issues faced by every urban centre – that's where designers should concentrate their efforts.' However, the next generation of planners might disagree, if doctorate student Suzy Wong is representative. 'I think planning is changing very fast,' she says. 'My contemporaries want urban designs that protect the environment, not only take waste water out of the city but treat it at the same time – that's an initiative for the future.' She also thinks there's too much repetition in urban architecture and that planners need to conceive of architecture in far more innovative and individual ways. Lavers, however, offers a word of caution. 'Planners live in the real world,' he says, 'or more accurately, they

each live in their own real world. It's not one size fits all. Each city is different, it has its own climate and landscape, its own types of stone, wood and traditional building methods. All of these should be apparent in the way each city is planned.' Given this diversity of opinion, it seems likely that debate over urban planning and design will continue for as long as there are cities.

Questions 1–6

Look at the following statements (Questions 1–6) and the list of researchers below.

Match each statement with one of the researchers, ***A****,* ***B****,* ***C*** *or* ***D****.*

Write the correct letter ***A–D*** *in boxes 1–6 on your answer sheet.*

NB *You may use any letter more than once.*

1 The focus should be on simple, universal, practical issues.

2 Conserving buildings of minor historical value is often overlooked.

3 Urban design should reflect local conditions and materials.

4 The creation of shared public spaces in cities is essential.

5 It's important to create unusual and original designs.

6 Urban planning is a unique type of design.

List of researchers

A	Dr Simon Lavers
B	Helene Olav
C	Professor Margaret Evans
D	Suzy Wong

IELTS PRACTICE TASK

Champions of the track

Researchers investigate what makes some athletes faster than others

With the next Olympics in sight, athletes, their trainers, and sports fans alike are wondering just what new records will be set in the marathon. In this event, runners must cover a distance of just over 26 miles, and what's amazing is that today's champions are running at a pace that could only be achieved for the 10,000 metres run a mere century ago. So have humans become better built in some way? Is it to do with better nutrition or training routines? Research teams have been looking into why these accomplishments have become possible.

Professor Eileen Atkinson is at the forefront of such studies. She has concluded that there are a number of key factors responsible for improved speed and pace. A hundred years back, there was no such thing as training every day. The widely held belief amongst athletes and coaches was that three or four times per week was sufficient, otherwise athletes could risk 'overtraining' and actually get worse rather than better at running. In the years since, that view has been completely rejected and the amount of training has increased: now runners are out on the track for hours at a time, each and every day. Atkinson is also keen to point out that athletes are no longer just from the developed world; perhaps partly due to sponsorship, athletes from developing countries are also able to compete, and with increasing frequency, win.

Atkinson and her team have also looked at what kind of treadmill times first-class athletes have achieved in the past and now. What they have found is that there is very little difference between current and previous generations when it comes to performance on a running machine. So why the big difference on the track? Atkinson puts it down to the fact that the design and construction of racetracks have come a long way, and sport shoe technology has seen similar improvement. Both these developments could be giving today's runners an edge. Atkinson's team have also been carefully measuring the oxygen consumption of athletes compared to non-athletes while on treadmills. In top athletes, the maximal oxygen uptake (the maximum capacity for oxygen consumption) will be far higher than the capacity of non-athletes, meaning that cardiac output, the amount of blood pumped per minute, will also be better. This all helps indicate a runner's level of aerobic fitness.

Another interesting aspect of successful marathon running that Atkinson explored was the impact of ageing on performance. Although the generally held view is that peak performance is normally achieved somewhere between the mid-twenties to mid-thirties, and that runners will experience a decline thereafter, this is an average, and not necessarily true for all individuals. Some runners in their forties, even fifties, are able to go the distance due to their commitment to tough training programmes. In other words, there is no set point at which an athlete should announce retirement.

TASK TYPE 11 Matching Sentence Endings

Atkinson is also keen to dispel another popular myth. The belief that there is a specific gene that guarantees athletic superiority is an idea that has no scientific foundation. Many genes play a role in enhancing athletic performance, but the likelihood of any one person having the exact grouping of genes required to become a natural champion is minimal. Rather, for many young athletes, it comes down to internal motivation and external incentives.

Questions 1–5

Complete each sentence with the correct ending, ***A–G****, below.*

Write the correct letter ***A–G*** *below.*

1 It is wrong to assume that runners' performances
2 The speeds of modern runners compared to earlier runners
3 The amount of oxygen the best runners can utilise during a race
4 The chances of older runners performing well in a race
5 The combination of genes in an individual runner

A can be linked to the performance of their hearts.
B may depend on what running style they adopt.
C will probably not play a role in their overall success.
D might be better because of superior equipment and facilities.
E can be weakened through daily practice.
F will gradually decrease over long distances.
G will depend on how hard they continue to train.