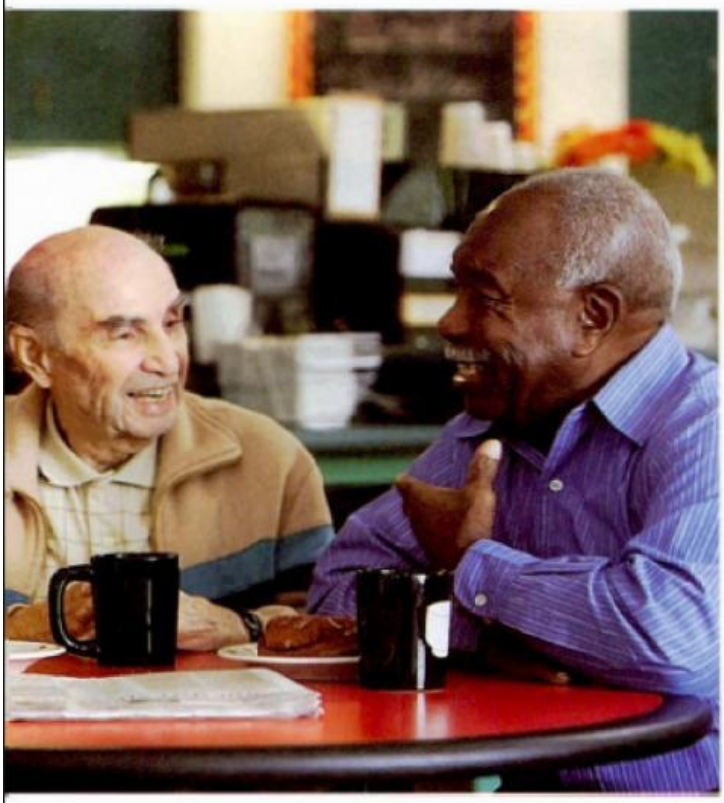
# READING PRACTICE

UNIT AIMS

**READING SKILLS**
Scanning for meaning
Identifying sentence function
Matching information to paragraphs (2)

**EXAM PRACTICE**
Matching information to paragraphs
Answering Yes/No/Not Given statements
Completing multiple-choice questions



## Scanning for meaning

**1** Read the table which gives the average lifespan for humans in different periods of history. Then answer questions a–c.

| Period | Average lifespan |
|---|---|
| Bronze age | 18 |
| Classical Greece | 28 |
| Medieval England | 33 |
| Late nineteenth century | 37 |
| Early twentieth century | 50 |
| Early twenty-first century | 68 |

a What reasons can you think of for the increase in lifespan?
b Some people in Classical Greece lived to a ripe old age. For example, Sophocles, the writer, died at the age of 91. Why do you think the average was so low?
c What are the disadvantages of the average person living so much longer than in the past?

### Technique

Practise scanning for synonyms of words and phrases. Always think of possible synonyms and paraphrases in exam questions. This will also help you build your vocabulary. You can, for example, keep lists of words and structures to reflect cause and effect, e.g. impact, influence, cause, as a result of, etc. Also record words and phrases with examples and practise transforming them into different word types.

**2** Look at phrases a–f and think of your own synonyms or phrases with similar meaning. Then match each one with a phrase 1–6.

a negative consequence
b non-conventional medicine
c indispensable part
d psychological well-being
e congenial surroundings
f enormous progress

1 vital role
2 unfortunate outcome
3 good mental health
4 pleasant environment
5 considerable improvement
6 alternative therapy

**3** Look at phrases a–e and think of a noun with a similar meaning for each. Then scan paragraph A on page 71 for nouns with a similar meaning and underline them.

a best period of their life
b period
c highest point
d difficulty
e benefits

LIVEWORKSHEETS

# Prime time rules

**A** People were not that long ago considered as entering their prime at 40. This was the age at which the peak of their wisdom and power was likely to be reached. Not any more. For an increasing number of people, it is now much later, between 50 and 65, which is effectively when people are thinking of retiring. And so, far from being the major problem that has been exercising politicians and individuals in recent years, the increasing numbers of active over fifties with a later and longer prime should be seen as assets to society, economically and socially. Provided, that is, that they are allowed to contribute to the community.



**B** Anxiety about funding 'older people' in general is based on a view of the over fifties and sixties living a life of decrepitude with costly nursing home care, and being a drain on the country's wealth. Stereotypical images of senior citizens haunt the general population. Perception tests in studies have shown that people who expect the so-called age-related illnesses like deafness and mental decline to happen in their old age conform to the stereotype and fulfil the prophecy. Thus, it is not surprising that negative images permeate society. More positive images of people in their prime or older in the media, etc would be a good start. There are encouraging signs that the boundaries of this stereotype are already being challenged. There are already TV programmes, for example, about people in their seventies and eighties involved in sports like sky-diving more often associated with the young. Some adverts are pushing the boundaries further by using older models to target beauty products at older sections of the population. After all, who has the accumulated wealth?

**C** Before looking at what, if anything, can be done to make sure that people can enjoy their prime and feel they can make a contribution to society, we should look at the causes of longevity. Technological advances primarily in medical science are often held up as the principal cause. However, education, wealth and the wide range of leisure pursuits available, along with a host of other factors, have led to a marked improvement in living standards throughout the world. People are, as a result, arriving at the threshold of retirement more active, physically and mentally, than any previous generations and in greater numbers, challenging the view that being 50 or even 60 is old.

**D** And the magic recipe to enhance our prime? It's all very basic stuff and not really magic at all. It does not need government committees or armies of bureaucrats to devise training packages. People are enhancing their 'prime' time without unnecessary interference. Government and planners should seek to inform themselves of what is happening rather than imposing some clumsy 'innovation'. Research has shown that physical exercise causes changes in the structure of the brain. MRI scans on a cohort of patients aged 58 to 77 have shown increases in the substance of the brain itself are brought about by exercise. There is evidence that the areas of the brain involved in memory and attention benefit from exercise – the areas that show the greatest age-related decline in humans.

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**4** Look at phrases a–e and think of a word or phrase with a similar meaning for each. Then scan paragraphs B–D in the passage for phrases with a similar meaning and underline them.

**a** a waste of the nation's money
**b** main factor
**c** questioning the notion
**d** secret formula
**e** introducing an unwanted new measure

**5** Think of synonyms for the key words in the sentences below.

**a** People in general are surrounded by conventional images of old people.
**b** Makers of beauty products could launch cheaper cosmetics aimed at older people.
**c** Research indicates that those who expect to be hard of hearing or senile when they grow old actually go on to become so.
**d** Administrative workers or government bodies have no need to put together guidelines to educate people.
**e** Studies have revealed that the brain continues to develop well into old age, regardless of how much exercise is taken.

**6** Three of the sentences in exercise 5 match sentences in the passage on page 71. Scan to find the three sentences and underline them.

## Identifying sentence function

**1** Paragraph A on page 71 contains a suggestion made by the author and a sentence with a conditional meaning. Answer questions a–e below. Then scan to find the sentences.

**a** Are the words *suggestion* and *condition* likely to be in the text?
**b** Will you scan the passage for meaning or words?
**c** Which words do you associate with *suggestion*?
**d** Which words do you associate with a *condition*?
**e** Is it efficient to read the whole paragraph?

**2** Scan the passage to find examples of functions a–e below, using the same techniques as you did for exercise 1.

**a** a claim (paragraph A)
**b** a problem (paragraph B)
**c** a conclusion (paragraph B)
**d** a recommendation (paragraph B)
**e** examples (paragraph B)

**3** Are the ideas in paragraph C organized around problem and solution, or cause and effect? Which phrases indicate this?

**4** Make a checklist of techniques of your own to scan for meaning for revision purposes. Revise the list as you prepare for the IELTS exam.

| |
|---|
| 1 Think of words with the same meaning as those in a question. |
| 2 |
| 3 |
| 4 |
| 5 |



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# Matching information to paragraphs (2)

**1** Think of at least three strategies you have used before to match information to paragraphs and note them in your checklist.

**2** Scan the previous passage and match phrases 1–5 to paragraphs A–D.

1 the fact that skydiving is more often seen as a pursuit for the young

2 a reference to research on exercise and brain function

3 the belief that being elderly means being infirm

4 the reasons why people live longer

5 the idea that the over fifties can be of use to society

**3** Do the phrases 1–5 match whole paragraphs or parts of paragraphs?

**4** Paragraphs E–G below in note form are a continuation of the reading passage on page 71. Match phrases 1–5 below with the relevant paragraph E–G.

**E** The benefits of diet – as well as exercise – healthy diet – avoiding junk perhaps also staves off mental decline – studies in children learning difficulties – so-called Durham trial – fish oil beneficial – effective on sizeable proportion of children – improves attention, etc, so not old wives' tale – sale of foods/ supplements containing Omega 3 increased intelligence attention span – not sure if benefit adults.

**F** How people can keep mentally active – greater interest now in mental stimulus to combat/slow down dementia – exercises – 'brain food' puzzles like sudoku, chess, crossword puzzles, mental arithmetic, subtracting backwards seven at a time from 1,000 to zero, showering with your eyes closed – some connection with left brain function as opposed to right brain – latter concerned with the creative side. Maybe more research needed: how opening up use of right brain might enhance mental ability.

**G** A conclusion – irony – general population 30 per cent obese – young people especially – older people now more active – interest in third age long may it continue – older people show young people the way.

1 various methods to improve mental ability

2 the fact that fish oil supplements may not benefit adults

3 a comparison between older people and less active young people

4 how diet helps improve mental activity in children

5 a recommendation that research into right-brain function should be carried out

LIVEWORKSHEETS

# Improve your IELTS word skills

**1** Match the words below with their function from the box.

**a** Because
**b** Consequently
**c** For instance
**d** Thus
**e** Moreover
**f** Yet
**g** Although
**h** In order to
**i** Provided that

condition ■ concession ■ example ■ additional information ■ conclusion ■ reason
contrast ■ purpose ■ result

**Technique**
Remember to think of the meaning of whole sentences, not just words, as you read.

**2** Which is the odd one out in the following sequences and why?

**a** furthermore/in addition/similarly/therefore/also
**b** meanwhile/but/however/though/even so
**c** firstly/secondly/finally/at first/first of all
**d** initially/at the beginning/firstly/at first
**e** consequently/as a result/subsequently/as a consequence
**f** recently/some time ago/lately/not long ago/a short time ago
**g** when/before/once/after/as soon as

**3** To help you find your way around a passage, you can look out for linking words and phrases. In the following sentences, find and underline examples of the functions in the box.

*Example*
Although I agree with the proposed increase in time, it is more important for the course to be updated. (concession)

result ■ reason ■ condition ■ concession ■ alternative ■ comparison ■ purpose

**a** Unless more funds are put into the health service soon, people will suffer.
**b** Because a record number of heart operations were successful, the programme was expanded.
**c** The funding dried up, which then led to a major crisis at the health clinic.
**d** More administrative staff could be employed or more nursing posts created.
**e** The first drug was pronounced safe to use whereas the second caused a number of serious side effects.
**f** The government opened three new hospitals so that they would be able to meet their targets.
**g** Although they may need to slow down a little, people continue to benefit from physical exercise well into old age.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

# Reading Passage 9

1 You should spend 20 minutes on questions 1–14, which are based on Reading Passage 9.

## Professional strangers: medical anthropology in action



**A** Back in the 1970s, I was an anthropology student sitting in the library doggedly reading books and articles about the social lives of people in Africa, Asia, and the South Pacific. Why doggedly? The scholarly reading matter covered kinship systems, clan alliances, land tenure and farming and political systems. Rarely did the reader of these texts catch a glimpse of the day-to-day lives of the people written about or what it was like to live amongst them. However, some books started with a preface describing how the anthropologist arrived in the distant village or town of study, found somewhere to live, and started engaging with local people. These accounts were often the most interesting part of the book and whetted my flagging appetite for medical anthropological research.

**B** Since graduating, I have applied my anthropological training to health-related projects across Africa and Asia. Some contracts have lasted two years and some two weeks. The short-term research I have done is sometimes called 'quick and dirty'. 'Quick' means that surveys are carried out and people interviewed in a matter of weeks rather than years; 'dirty' means that the findings are analysed rapidly without too much concern for 'cleaning' the data so that exact percentages can be calculated and any inconsistencies in what people said can be accounted for. Quick and dirty research elicits the voices of the people for whom a development project is intended. The approach provides facts and figures that guide project design, but may not satisfy purist academics.

**C** A lot of books discuss the ethics and methods of research in more detail than in the past. Such accounts of fieldwork contain useful ideas and guidance, usually in the introductory chapters. There are a number of particularly sensitive areas that people interviewed may be reticent about, notably personal finance, sex and illegal activities. Yet, research of sensitive topics with people considered 'hard to reach' can be interesting and rewarding. There are some basic rules and approaches that should keep the researcher, especially in the medical field, safe and the data collection ethical and effective.

**D** Anybody going to do fieldwork should dress carefully. It is important to try and wear clothes that do not draw attention to yourself. You do not want to be more conspicuous than you need by being more smartly or formally attired than the people you are going to talk to. Equally, it may be inappropriate to copy the dress code of interviewees, as you risk looking ridiculous.

**E** It is always useful to work with local guides or gatekeepers who can help you reach people who are not part of mainstream society. For example, if you want to study the world of illegal drug users it is best to work with an insider. If you already know any drug users, ask one of them to introduce you to other people in his or her network and to vouch for you. Alternatively, you could approach drug or social service agency workers and ask them to make introductions.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

**F** When you interview people, it is important that they are not worried about confidentiality. Often people will not tell you anything of great interest unless they receive assurances that you will not reveal their private business or their full names. When you ask sensitive questions, interviewees may want you to answer similar questions in return, so researchers should be prepared to disclose some personal information. It is important that you do not lie about yourself and what you are doing: this is unethical and you risk being caught out and losing credibility.

**G** Sensitive questions should be asked in a matter-of-fact manner because, if you appear embarrassed, the respondent will also be embarrassed and will 'clam up'. Do not be, or appear to be, judgemental or shocked, no matter what you hear, as the interviewee will sense your reaction and stop talking. In addition, you should not contradict people even if they have said something that you know to be incorrect. You are there to listen and collect data, not to enter into argument or discussion. When the interview is over you can correct any potentially harmful misconceptions that the interviewee holds. But the most important rule to remember is: if you get nervous or scared, leave the situation.

**H** Recently, I have started saying to colleagues that there are three qualities required in the anthropologist working in 'the field': liking people; respecting people; curiosity about people's lives. If you cultivate these qualities, the tips I have outlined will come naturally to your work.

## Technique

1 Survey the whole reading passage and the questions.
2 Skim the title and predict the contents of the passage.
3 Skim the reading passage in no more than two minutes.
4 Skim the questions. Use the questions to help you improve your understanding of the general content of the reading passage.
5 Use the questions to help you think of the text features in the reading passage, e.g. classification.

*Questions 1–6*

*Which paragraph, (A–H) contains the information in 1–6 below?*

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

**1** ways to make contacts with interviewees

**2** the fact that the interviewer should appear not to react to what the interviewee says

**3** how to dress when talking to interviewees

**4** how a deep interest in anthropological research commenced

**5** the fact that the interviewer should not argue with the interviewee

**6** research that is a rough estimate of a situation

## Technique

**Matching phrases**

1 Identify which phrases refer to a part or the whole of a paragraph, where possible.
2 Decide where the information is likely to be: the beginning, middle or end.
3 Scan for the words in the phrases or synonyms of them.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

*Questions 7–13*

Do the following statements agree with the views of the writer in Reading Passage 9?

*Write*

| | |
|---|---|
| ***YES*** | *if the statement agrees with the opinion of the writer* |
| ***NO*** | *if the statement contradicts the opinion of the writer* |
| ***NOT GIVEN*** | *if it is impossible to say what the writer thinks about this* |

**7** Accounts of anthropologists arriving in distant villages were frequently more interesting than any other book contents.

**8** More research should be carried out in the field.

**9** 'Quick and dirty' research is necessary for planned development projects.

**10** Contacts with people who are on the fringes of society should only be made through local guides or gatekeepers.

**11** Researchers should never answer questions about themselves when they are interviewing.

**12** It is better for researchers to continue with an interview even if they are frightened.

**13** Researchers need to elicit information without making any apparent judgement on it.

*Questions 14*

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

**14** Which of the following statements best summarizes the writer's conclusion?

**A** Anthropologists who cultivate certain traits will find that good practice becomes instinctive.

**B** Anthropologists working in the field will acquire certain interpersonal skills naturally.

**C** Anthropologists' acquisition of the advice given depends on the cultivation of a wide range of qualities.

**D** Anthropologists working in the field can easily acquire good habits.

**2** Answer these questions.

**a** Do you think research into people's behaviour is useful? How?
**b** Who would benefit most from such research, e.g. medical professionals?
**c** Are we too concerned about research into people's behaviour nowadays, e.g. doing surveys about people's eating and exercise habits?

LIVEWORKSHEETS