

## IELTS READING TEST 23

### PASSAGE 1

#### **A chance discovery in New Zealand has challenged the country's recorded history.**

One October afternoon, a young New Zealander, Sam Tobin, called his dogs and went for a walk down to the nearby Ruamahanga River. Having been very high for days, the river had at last fallen, and Tobin was eager to see what changes the floods had brought. The family farm borders the river and a four-metre-high flood bank testifies to its natural tendency to flood.

Tobin stepped out onto a broad shoulder of river sand, where he noticed what he initially took to be a whitish rock, lit by the sun. Then, getting closer, he realised it was a bone. Such a thing was not uncommon in these parts-he had often come across bone fragments, or even whole skeletons, of cows and sheep. But as he scraped aside the stones he realised it was a human bone, something quite new in his experience. As he picked it up, he saw it was a skull, discoloured with age.

Tobin replaced the skull and hurried home to tell his mother what the river had delivered to their doorstep. It would prove to be a spectacular find, setting in motion an investigation by some of the country's most respected specialists, and ultimately challenging our most firmly held assertions about the human settlement of New Zealand.

The police were immediately called, but despite a thorough search could find nothing that might shed light on the identity of the Ruamahanga skull, or the circumstances of its sudden appearance. The skull was then taken north to be examined by forensic pathologist Dr Ferris, at Auckland Hospital. Despite being hampered by its damaged and incomplete condition- the jawbone and lower left portion of the cranium were missing- Dr Ferris determined that the skull was that of a female. He then consulted with a colleague, Dr Koelmeyer, who believed that the deterioration of the bone placed the time of death before living memory' and, most significantly as it would turn out, the skull appeared to be European in origin.

Wellington-based forensic anthropologist Dr Watt also examined the skull, and suggested it belonged to a 40-45 year-old. He believed that it could be the remains of an old farm burial, but was not certain, and proposed the use of radiocarbon dating to make sure it wasn't a recent death. As a result, the Institute of Geological and Nuclear Sciences (GNS) in Lower Hutt was contacted, and provided with a sample of bone that had originated in the top of the skull. In a little over three weeks the seemingly astonishing results from the GNS laboratory came back. Cutting through the bewildering complexity of the scientific analysis was a single line reading: conventional radiocarbon age approximately 296 years.

This was staggering, for the skull was about 200 years older than Dr Koelmeyer had believed.

Of course, a skull of this age wasn't particularly unusual in New Zealand. The Maori people have been living in the country for at least 800 years and scientists frequently come across human remains of considerable age. The fascinating question, however, was how a skull of this race, let alone this gender, had reached these remote islands in the South Pacific at such a time, long before the arrival of the explorer Captain Cook in 1769, and perhaps even before the very first European landfall- the fleeting visit of the Dutch explorer Tasman in 1642- neither of whom had women among their crews.

The first known European women in the Pacific came with a doomed colonising venture which sailed from Peru in 1595 under the command of Spanish captain Mendana. However, it is unlikely the Ruamahanga skull originated from this expedition because no evidence of Mendana's ships has ever been found in New Zealand, while a team of archaeologists working in the Solomon Islands in 1970 did discover the remains of European vessels dating from the 16th century.

Two centuries were to pass before the first recorded European females arrived in New Zealand, both having escaped from prison in Australia. Kathleen Hagerty and Charlotte Edgar are known to have reached the country in 1806. How do we account for the Ruamahanga skull, which appears to be about 100 years older than that? It is impossible to say with certainty, but the most likely explanation is that a Spanish or Portuguese trading-ship was washed onto these wild shores as a result of a shipwreck and a woman got ashore. Implausible, perhaps, but the Ruamahanga skull, today resting in the Wellington Museum, could be the kind of concrete evidence that demands such a re-evaluation of history.

## QUESTIONS 1-13

### Questions 1-4

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

In boxes 1-4 on your answer sheet, 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. The Ruamahanga River often floods.
2. When Tobin first found the object in the river, he mistook it for something else.
3. Tobin could not decide what part of the body the bone came from.
4. Tobin's mother was surprised that the skull caused debate among specialists.

### Questions 5-9

Complete the flowchart below.

Choose **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER** from Passage 1 for each answer.

Write your answer in boxes 5-9 on your answer sheet.

#### The events after the river flooded

Stage 1: Tobin found a human skull

Stage 2: The (5)\_\_\_\_\_ were initially involved in trying to explain the presence of the skull.

Stage 3: Dr Ferris believed the skull belonged to a female

Stage 4: Dr Koelmeyer suggested it was a (6)\_\_\_\_\_ skull

Stage 5: Dr Watt recommended (7)\_\_\_\_\_ to establish the skull's age.

Stage 6: A bone (8)\_\_\_\_\_ was sent to the GNS

Stage 7: The age of the skull was about (9)\_\_\_\_\_ years

### Questions 10-13

Complete the notes below. Choose **ONE WORD ONLY** from the passage for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes 10-13 on your answer sheet.

#### The problem of the skull's origins

- Old bones common in NZ- Maori living there for 800 years
- Ruahahanga skull surprising because of its:

+ age

+ (10)\_\_\_\_\_

+ gender

#### Mendana expedition

- Possible source of skull
- But probably did not visit NZ
- Evidence of this expedition found elsewhere by (11)\_\_\_\_\_

#### New Zealand

- First European explorer arrived in 1642
- Hagerty and Edgar arrived in 1806 from (12)\_\_\_\_\_ where they had been imprisoned

#### Possible solution

- Ruamahanga skull may have reached NZ in 17th century after a (13)\_\_\_\_\_

## PASSAGE 2

You should spend about **20 minutes** on Questions **14-26**, which are based on **Reading Passage 2** on pages **6 and 7**.

### Playing Soccer

There are many differences between playing soccer in the street and joining a youth team in an organized league in the USA.

A

Street soccer, as its name implies, is an informal variation of the sport, often played on the street, particularly in urban areas. There are many reasons for the widespread popularity of street soccer. Unlike youth soccer, its more formally organized counterpart, no large space is needed, and goal posts, corner markers, and marked lines, associated with the formal game, are typically absent, as are game officials or referees. Another attraction of street soccer is that it is played frequently and competitively, but does not necessarily require standard 11-a-side teams or fixed playing positions. Unlike in youth soccer, inexperienced street soccer players rarely learn from repetitive technical and tactical drills. Instead, they learn from their poor performance in competition, unconscious of the skills they are nonetheless developing, and without older adults or coaches present. Players learn without effort through playing the game and soon attain an almost natural feeling for the sport.

B

However, there are lots of cities in the world today where conditions are such that street soccer is no longer possible. Congested traffic now dominates where games were once played. Parks and open fields are used as hangouts for older teenagers with other interests. Add to this the requirement in many localities for official permits to use public spaces and the managed schedules that many young people have today, and spontaneous play of any kind is hard to imagine.

C

In spite of all these obstacles, which are probably solvable in most instances, there is another sociological explanation of why in many places street soccer doesn't enjoy the same popularity it once did. In his book *How Soccer Explains the World*, US writer Franklin Foer observes:

*"But for all the talk of freedom, the 1960s parenting style had a far less relaxed side too. Like the 1960s consumer movement which brought seat belts and airbags to cars, the (youth) soccer movement felt like it could create a set of... regulations that would protect both the child's body and mind from damage. Soccer leagues like the one I played in as a child handed out 'participation' prizes to every player, no matter how few games his (or her) team won. Where most of the world accepts the practice of using your head to hit the ball as an essential element of the game, some (youth) soccer parents have worried over the potential for injury to the brain. An entire industry grew up to manufacture protective headgear..."*

Even though very little medical evidence supports this fear, some youth leagues prohibited heading the ball altogether."

D

A growing body of people don't believe street soccer involves a legitimate educational method. They argue that children need to be taught by experts. Youth soccer instruction now begins with four-year-olds, so that they will have an advantage as six-year-olds. This need to get ahead brings with it a fear of falling behind that only expert instruction can prevent. This type of instruction leaves no room for the trial and error approach of street soccer.

E

One of the basic ideas of street soccer is that young players are assigned a particular role by a better player and are expected to play for the good of the team. Such an assignment runs counter to the idea of youth soccer that every child needs to learn every position and will benefit from doing so. In street soccer, you fill the role that you are best suited to at a particular time. While this role assignment can change from game to game, the purpose is always the same: to get the best out of each individual at any given moment.

F

In street soccer, children have to learn patience, to wait their turn, to realize that they are not entitled to make decisions, or even be listened to simply because they show up. Positions of responsibility are earned through competition within the team. Younger players in street soccer must wait to attain those positions. In youth soccer, however, with its overly democratic values, youngsters are guaranteed their time in the spotlight. Whether it's their turn to be captain, to play a central position, or to take a crucial shot, youth soccer players come to believe that hard work and patience aren't really necessary.

G

Not only does every youth soccer player get a chance, it is assumed that each individual has played well. "Everyone's a winner, no one's a loser" is a guiding principle of youth soccer. This ensures each individual goes away feeling positive about themselves. No one can leave a game or a practice feeling bad. But, if there really are no losers, then why try at all? Since giving less than your best receives the same reward as giving your best, why go to any extra effort?

In street soccer, every game results in a winner and a loser, and everyone knows who is who. Losing a game is a common experience, and players learn early on how to handle this. As a result, unlike most youth soccer players, they acquire resilience.

A further difference between these two strands of soccer is that in street soccer a formal record is not kept. You can lose one day and win the next. The results are only temporary and are forgotten within minutes of the end of the match. But in organized youth soccer, the position each person plays and the results are formally noted and maintained throughout a season.

#### Questions 14-19

Reading Passage 2 has seven sections, A-G.

Which section contains the following information?

Write the correct letter, A-G, in boxes 14-19 on your answer sheet.

14 a contrast between the ways young players gain experience of playing different positions

15 examples outside sport of greater emphasis on individual safety

16 a description of methods of selection for leadership on soccer teams

17 details of urban changes that discourage street soccer

18 a mention of the lesson that failure teaches street soccer players

19 an explanation of why youth soccer emphasises the need for coaches

#### Questions 20 and 21

Choose TWO letters, A-E.

Write the correct letters in boxes 20 and 21 on your answer sheet.

The list below gives some possible reasons for the popularity of street soccer.

Which TWO of these reasons are mentioned by the writer of the text?

A Many famous soccer players got their start in street soccer.

B Young people can begin playing street soccer at a very early age.

C You do not need elaborate facilities to play street soccer.

D Inexperienced street soccer players are not criticised for mistakes.

E Street soccer teams can have varying numbers of players.

#### Questions 22 and 23

Choose TWO letters, A-E.

Write the correct letters in boxes 22 and 23 on your answer sheet.

The list below gives some possible results of the 1960s parenting style.

Which TWO of these results are mentioned by Franklin Foer in the excerpt from *How Soccer Explains the World*?

A Participation in youth soccer became much more expensive.

B Some youth soccer leagues adopted more restrictive rules of play.

C Fewer young people joined youth soccer teams.

**D** Youth soccer players were sometimes rewarded for simply playing in games.

**E** Soccer equipment manufacturers directed advertising towards parents.

**Questions 24-26**

Complete the summary below.

Choose **ONE WORD ONLY** from the passage for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes **24-26** on your answer sheet.

**Winners and losers**

For youth soccer players, a key **24** \_\_\_\_\_ is that they should always come away from the game with a positive attitude. In this respect, regardless of the effort the players make, they get some kind of **25** \_\_\_\_\_ at the end of a game.

In street soccer, however, players gain resilience because they have to learn to cope with failure. But the outcome of a match isn't remembered for long. In fact, no one ever keeps a **26** \_\_\_\_\_ of the results of games.

### PASSAGE 3

#### Assessing the risk

**A**

As a title for a supposedly unprejudiced debate on scientific progress, “Panic attack: interrogating our obsession with risk” did not bode well. Held last week at the Royal Institution in London, the event brought together scientists from across the world to ask why society is so obsessed with risk and to call for a “more rational” approach. “We seem to be organising society around the grandmotherly maxim of ‘better safe than sorry’,” exclaimed Spiked, the online publication that organised the event. “What are the consequences of this overbearing concern with risks?”

**B**

The debate was preceded by a survey of 40 scientists who were invited to describe how awful our lives would be if the “precautionary principle” had been allowed to prevail in the past. Their response was: no heart surgery or antibiotics, and hardly any drugs at all; no aeroplanes, bicycles or high-voltage power grids; no pasteurisation, pesticides or biotechnology; no quantum mechanics; no wheel; no “discovery” of America. In short, their message was: no risk, no gain.

**C**

They have absolutely missed the point. The precautionary principle is a subtle idea. It has various forms, but all of them generally include some notion of cost-effectiveness. Thus the point is not simply to ban things that are not known to be absolutely safe. Rather, it says: “Of course you can make no progress without risk. But if there is no obvious gain from taking the risk, then don’t take it.”

**D**

Clearly, all the technologies listed by the 40 well-chosen savants were innately risky at their inception, as all technologies are. But all of them would have received the green light under the precautionary principle because they all had the potential to offer tremendous benefits – the solutions to very big problems – if only the snags could be overcome.

**E**

If the precautionary principle had been in place, the scientists tell us, we would not have antibiotics. But of course, we would – if the version of the principle that sensible people now understand had been applied. When penicillin was discovered in the 1920s, infective bacteria were laying waste to the world. Children died from diphtheria and whooping cough, every open-drain brought the threat of typhoid, and any wound could lead to septicaemia and even gangrene.

**F**

Penicillin was turned into a practical drug during the Second World War when the many pestilences that result from were threatened to kill more people than the bombs. Of course antibiotics were a priority. Of course, the risks, such as they could be perceived, were worth taking.

**G**

And so with the other items on the scientists’ list: electric light bulbs, blood transfusions. CAT scans, knives, the measles vaccine – the precautionary principle would have prevented all of them, they tell us. But this is just plain wrong. If the precautionary principle had been applied properly, all these creations would have passed muster, because all offered incomparable advantages compared to the risks perceived at the time.

**H**

Another issue is at stake here. Statistics are not the only concept people use when weighing up risk. Human beings, subtle and evolved creatures that we are, do not survive to three-score years and ten simply by thinking like pocket calculators. A crucial issue is the consumer’s choice. In deciding whether to pursue the development of new technology, the consumer’s right to choose should be considered alongside considerations of risk and benefit. Clearly, skiing is more dangerous than genetically modified tomatoes. But people who ski choose to do so; they do not have skiing thrust upon them by portentous experts of the kind who now feel they have the right to reconstruct our crops. Even

with skiing, there is the matter of cost-effectiveness to consider: skiing, I am told, is exhilarating. Where is the exhilaration in GM soya?

**I**

Indeed, in contrast to all the other items on Spiked's list, GM crops stand out as an example of a technology whose benefits are far from clear. Some of the risks can at least be defined. But in the present economic climate, the benefits that might accrue from them seem dubious. Promoters of GM crops believe that the future population of the world cannot be fed without them. That is untrue. The crops that really matter are wheat and rice, and there is no GM research in the pipeline that will seriously affect the yield of either. GM is used to make production cheaper and hence more profitable, which is an extremely questionable ambition.

**J**

The precautionary principle provides the world with a very important safeguard. If it had been in place in the past it might, for example, have prevented insouciant miners from polluting major rivers with mercury. We have come to a sorry pass when scientists, who should above all be dispassionate scholars, feel they should misrepresent such a principle for the purposes of commercial and political propaganda. People at large continue to mistrust science and the high technologies it produces partly because they doubt the wisdom of scientists. On such evidence as this, these doubts are fully justified.

Questions 1-6

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

*In boxes 27-32 on your answer sheet, write*

**TRUE** if the statement is true

**FALSE** if the statement is false

**NOT GIVEN** if the information is not given in the passage

27. The title of the debate is not unbiased.

28. All the scientists invited to the debate were from the field of medicine.

29. The message those scientists who conducted the survey were sending was people shouldn't take risks.

30. All the 40 listed technologies are riskier than other technologies.

31. It was worth taking the risks to invent antibiotics.

32. All the other inventions on the list were also judged by the precautionary principle.

Questions 7-13

Complete the following summary of the paragraphs of Reading Passage

Using **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** from the Reading Passage for each answer.

*Write your answers in boxes 33-39 on your answer sheet.*

When applying the precautionary principle to decide whether to invent a new technology, people should also the consideration of the **33** \_\_\_\_\_, along with the usual consideration of **34** \_\_\_\_\_. For example, though risky and dangerous enough, people still enjoy **35** \_\_\_\_\_ for the excitement it provides. On the other hand, experts believe that future population desperately needs **36** \_\_\_\_\_ in spite of their undefined risks. However, the researchers conducted so far have not been directed towards increasing the yield of **37** \_\_\_\_\_, but to reduce the cost of **38** \_\_\_\_\_ and to bring more profit out of it. In the end, such selfish use of the precautionary principle for business and political gain has often led people to **39** \_\_\_\_\_ science for they believe scientists are not to be trusted.

Question 14

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

*Write your answers in boxes 40 on your answer sheet.*

40. What is the main theme of the passage?

- A** people have the right to doubt science and technologies
- B** the precautionary principle could have prevented the development of science and technology
- C** there are not enough people who truly understand the precautionary principle
- D** the precautionary principle bids us take risks at all costs