# UNIT 1: URBAN AND RURAL LIFE

## A. READING

**Exercise 1: Read the groups of words that begin with the same prefix. Match the meanings with the prefixes.**

from one thing / place to another | future | make the opposite of | too much

under / less than | wrongly / incorrectly

1 over- (*overweight*, *overpaid*, *overestimate*)

2 mis- (*misuse*, *misunderstand*, *mispronounce*)

3 sub- (*substandard*, *sub-zero*, *submarine*)

4 fore- (*foresee*, *forethought*, *forecast*)

5 de- (*deodorant*, *defrost*, *demystify*)

6 trans- (*transfer*, *transform*, *transcribe*)

**Exercise 2: Read the comments made by different speakers. Match the descriptions of what the speakers are doing with the comments.**

complaining about inaccurate information | complaining that something isn't good enough

criticising someone's lifestyle and health | describing someone's stage of life

explaining what someone approves and disapproves of

suggesting how to describe something's history

talking about the advantages of being prepared for what is going to happen

1 'He's overweight because he overeats.'

2 'The service I've received today has been substandard.'



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3 'I was misquoted and my views were misrepresented.'

4 'She's always been pro-trade and anti-capitalist at the same time.'

5 'If you want to sell your old bike, don't call it "used". Call it "pre-owned and pre-loved".'

6 'My grandparents are enjoying their post-retirement years.'

7 'Forewarned is forearmed. That's always been a favourite idiom of mine.'

**Exercise 3 : Read the information about the matching headings task in the IELTS Reading test. Then add the correct headings for the paragraphs. Use the headings in the box. There are two extra headings.**

How being able to match headings can help in real life

One of the biggest challenges in the IELTS test

Skills you need to succeed at the task

What to watch out for

What you have to do

Why paraphrasing is important

1

The task involves choosing the most suitable headings for the paragraphs in a text. There are usually between five and seven paragraphs, and there are also two extra headings that you don't need.

2

Study the paragraphs before the headings. Don't try to find a paragraph for each heading, as two of the headings won't be used. As you do the task, keep track of which headings you've used, as you can only use a heading once. And as always, keep an eye on time, as you only have 20 minutes to answer all 13 or 14 questions on the whole text. And 20 minutes can go by very quickly!



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**3**

Remember that just because you see the same word in the heading and one of the paragraphs, this doesn't mean you've found the answer. It's more important to look for matching meanings in headings and paragraphs, not just matching words. These reading tasks check that you can understand ideas expressed in different words, which is one of the key skills you really need in this task.

**4**

As well as identifying paraphrases, you need to be able to distinguish between headings, remembering that some of them might sound quite similar, so try to express them differently in your own words. When reading each paragraph, you also need to distinguish between the main idea of the paragraph and the extra detail. Bear in mind that the heading will probably relate to the main idea, rather than some minor detail. This central idea is often (but not always) referred to in the first and / or last sentence of the paragraph, so it's a good idea to check these.

**Exercise 4 : Read the information. Then read the topic sentences. Choose the correct descriptions of what the paragraphs will be about.**

The first sentence in a paragraph is called the *topic sentence*. This usually contains clues as to what the rest of the paragraph will be about. In this exercise, you will see five topic sentences (from a five-paragraph text, which you will read later) and predict what the rest of the paragraph is likely to be about.

**Topic sentence A**
One of the key challenges facing the world is going to be coping with the hundreds of millions who will flock to the growing number of overpopulated megacities, especially in developing countries.

The rest of paragraph A is likely to tell us about *another challenge that needs to be addressed / consequences of falling populations / examples of cities where this has happened / reasons why falling populations fall further/the lives of people living in the countryside* .

**Topic sentence B**
A drop in a city's population usually leads to a few empty or boarded-up and unoccupied homes, hardly enough to make the headlines or raise eyebrows.

The rest of paragraph B is likely to tell us about *another challenge that needs to be addressed / consequences of falling populations / examples of cities where this has happened / reasons why falling populations fall further / the lives of people living in the countryside* .


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**Topic sentence C**
That's just the thing: once a population starts going down, that decline tends to continue.

The rest of paragraph C is likely to tell us about *another challenge that needs to be addressed / consequences of falling populations / examples of cities where this has happened / reasons why falling populations fall further / the lives of people living in the countryside .*

**Topic sentence D**
Many cities that are now declining relied heavily on a specific industry for employment of a large portion of the workforce.

The rest of paragraph D is likely to tell us about *another challenge that needs to be addressed / consequences of falling populations / examples of cities where this has happened / reasons why falling populations fall further / the lives of people living in the countryside .*

**Topic sentence E**
It's this desire to enjoy many of the aspects of an imagined utopia that is prompting many urban dwellers to pack up and move out to the country.

The rest of paragraph E is likely to tell us about *another challenge that needs to be addressed / consequences of falling populations examples of cities where this has happened / reasons why falling populations fall further / the lives of people living in the countryside .*

**Exercise 5: Later in the unit, you will complete an IELTS Reading matching headings task. First, read the descriptions and choose the correct answers to complete the sentences.**

1 One of the heading options is *The perks of rural life*. A paragraph with this heading is likely to be about ...
- ◯ statistics concerning numbers of people living in the countryside.
- ◯ the benefits of living in the countryside.

2 Another heading option is *A widely publicised phenomenon*. This paragraph probably focuses on something that people ...
- ◯ do a lot.
- ◯ know about.

3 *Divided generations* is another option. A paragraph with this heading is likely to focus on reasons why ...
- ◯ people of different ages spend less time together.
- ◯ younger and older people behave differently from each other.

4 A paragraph with the heading *More common than you might think* would be about ...
- ◯ something that happens a lot.
- ◯ something that people think about a lot.


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5 The heading *The reasons why populations fall* could be used with a paragraph looking at ...

- ◯ the causes of falling populations.
- ◯ the results of falling populations.

6 A paragraph headed *The impact of migration on rural infrastructure* will focus on ...

- ◯ the causes of migration.
- ◯ the effects of migration.

7 The heading *The effects of economic downturn* suggests that the accompanying paragraph will be about ...

- ◯ what happens when a town gets poorer.
- ◯ why some towns are poor and others are rich.

**Exercise 6 : The article has five paragraphs, A–E. Read the article and match the paragraphs with the headings. There are two extra headings.**

**Paragraph A**
One of the key challenges facing the world is going to be coping with the hundreds of millions who will flock to the growing number of overpopulated megacities, especially in developing countries. This has received a great deal of media attention; books have been written, conferences organised and committees established to debate the causes of urbanisation, and more importantly, what can be done to improve the fate of those making the move into these continually growing conurbations. But the same is not true of a second, and closely related trend, which raises a serious dilemma: what to do about the cities that are losing people.

**Paragraph B**
A drop in a city's population usually leads to a few empty or boarded-up and unoccupied homes, hardly enough to make the headlines or raise eyebrows. But they're hardly unusual. One in ten US cities is actually shrinking. In Japan, larger cities are thriving – and growing – while many of the smaller ones are in decline, both demographically and economically. In Latvia, many young adults have turned remarkably anti-provincial and have headed for the capital, Riga, in large numbers, leaving a number of ghost towns. Almost silently, this trend is being repeated right across the globe, almost without anyone noticing. Several South Korean cities are also becoming smaller, and this trend will continue unless birth rates there increase.

**Paragraph C**
That's just the thing: once a place starts getting smaller, the decline tends to continue. There are several explanations for this. When young adults leave the town of their birth and don't return, the town loses not just those adults, but also the children that they would have had later had they stayed. As populations drop, the average age of the inhabitants increases until most people are post-childbearing age. This is what has happened to towns like Christchurch in the UK. It's a vicious cycle; it means, of course, fewer youngsters to bring down the average age, and consequently, the trend gathers momentum and accelerates. Additionally, of course, higher average age is closely linked with increased mortality, with each death further reducing the population.


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**Paragraph D**
Many cities that are now declining relied heavily on a specific industry for the employment of a large portion of the workforce. A classic example is Detroit, once the centre of America's thriving car industry, but now a sparsely populated urban wasteland. Flint, another ex-industrial powerhouse, can no longer provide the jobs its residents need and so many have left, driven away by unemployment and the prospect of better opportunities elsewhere. For others, a rural life has a greater appeal and this tempts them to leave the city; living in the countryside typically affords lower property prices, healthier living and lower rates of crime.

**Paragraph E**
It's this desire to enjoy many of the aspects of an imagined utopia that is prompting many urban dwellers to pack up and move out to the country. Once there, they can grow their own potatoes, have time to talk to their neighbours and not worry about what their kids are up to. Technological changes mean that for many professionals, there's not so much difference between being in the city and living miles from anywhere, as long as they have a car and a decent internet connection. Many city-to-country migrants, such as Helen Dobson, who recently moved out of Manchester, find that they have to put up with substandard wi-fi anyway – but that's a different story.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | The reasons why populations fall |
| 1 Paragraph A | | More common than you might think |
| 2 Paragraph B | | The effects of economic downturn |
| 3 Paragraph C | | The impact of migration on rural infrastructure |
| 4 Paragraph D | | The perks of rural life |
| 5 Paragraph E | | A widely publicised phenomenon |
| | | Divided generations |

**Exercise 7: Read the sentences from the article. Choose the correct definitions of the words and phrases in bold.**

1 This has received **a great deal of** media attention; books have been written, conferences organised and committees established to debate the causes of urbanisation …

- ◯ a good arrangement for
- ◯ a large amount of

2 Several South Korean cities are also becoming smaller, and this trend will continue unless the **birth rate** increases.

- ◯ number of babies being born
- ◯ quality of healthcare

3 It means, of course, fewer youngsters to bring down the average age, and consequently, the trend gathers momentum and **accelerates**.

- ◯ becomes more widely understood
- ◯ gets faster


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4 A classic example is Detroit, once the centre of America's **thriving** car industry, but now a sparsely populated urban wasteland.

- ◯ busy and financially successful
- ◯ declining

5 Many cities that are now declining relied heavily on a specific industry for the employment of a large **portion** of the workforce.

- ◯ payment
- ◯ percentage

6 Flint, another ex-industrial **powerhouse**, can no longer provide the jobs its residents need, and so many have left ...

- ◯ place that produces electricity
- ◯ place with lots of energy, activity and skill

7 ... and so many have left, **driven away** by unemployment and the prospect of better opportunities ...

- ◯ forced to leave
- ◯ travelling by car

**Exercise 8 : Read the information. Then read the blog post and statements 1–4. Choose False or Not Given.**

In the IELTS Reading test, you might see a True / False / Not Given task.

Deciding whether a statement is true should be reasonably clear. But many students are unsure about the differences between statements that are false (i.e. we know they are not true) and statements that are not given (i.e. they could be true, or they could be false; we don't have enough information to know). In this exercise, the bold sections of the text are the bits you need to think about.

*Meet lifestyle blogger Helen Dobson, who swapped city life for a move out to the country.*

A year ago, my husband and I made the move out of **Manchester, where we'd spent virtually our entire lives**, and relocated to a tiny village in the hills, miles away from anywhere. It was **a move prompted by lots of different things: the birth of our baby son**, changes to our jobs and the desire to have more space.

Having lived in a nice part of Manchester for ages, I realised that for years I'd been taking the ready availability of everything for granted. **When the population is greatly reduced, inevitably so is choice, from schools to types of cheese. There isn't a decent Indian restaurant for miles, and we have to drive 30 minutes to get decent handmade organic bread. But, of course, these are outrageously first-world problems.**

**1** Helen was born in Manchester. *False/Not Given*
**2** Helen's baby was born after she moved out to the countryside. *False/Not Given*
**3** The schools near Helen's new home aren't very good. *False/Not Given*
**4** Helen considers the limited shopping facilities a major problem. *False/Not Given*


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**Exercise 9 : Read the information. Then read the article again. Do the statements agree with the information in the article? Choose True, False or Not Given.**

Choose
*True* if the statement agrees with the information
*False* if the statement contradicts the information
*Not Given* if there is no information on this.

**Paragraph A**
One of the key challenges facing the world is going to be coping with the hundreds of millions who will flock to the growing number of overpopulated megacities, especially in developing countries. This has received a great deal of media attention; books have been written, conferences organised and committees established to debate the causes of urbanisation, and more importantly, what can be done to improve the fate of those making the move into these continually growing conurbations. But the same is not true of a second, and closely related trend, which raises a serious dilemma: what to do about the cities that are losing people.

**Paragraph B**
A drop in a city's population usually leads to a few empty or boarded-up and unoccupied homes, hardly enough to make the headlines or raise eyebrows. But they're hardly unusual. One in ten US cities is actually shrinking. In Japan, larger cities are thriving – and growing – while many of the smaller ones are in decline, both demographically and economically. In Latvia, many young adults have turned remarkably anti-provincial and have headed for the capital, Riga, in large numbers, leaving a number of ghost towns. Almost silently, this trend is being repeated right across the globe, almost without anyone noticing. Several South Korean cities are also becoming smaller, and this trend will continue unless birth rates there increase.

**Paragraph C**
That's just the thing: once a place starts getting smaller, the decline tends to continue. There are several explanations for this. When young adults leave the town of their birth and don't return, the town loses not just those adults, but also the children that they would have had there later had they stayed. As populations drop, the average age of the inhabitants increases until most people are post-childbearing age. This is what has happened to towns like Christchurch in the UK. It's a vicious cycle; it means, of course, fewer youngsters to bring down the average age, and consequently, the trend gathers momentum and accelerates. Additionally, of course, higher average age is closely linked with increased mortality, with each death further reducing the population.

**Paragraph D**
Many cities that are now declining relied heavily on a specific industry for the employment of a large portion of the workforce. A classic example is Detroit, once the centre of America's thriving car industry, but now a sparsely populated urban wasteland. Flint, another ex-industrial powerhouse, can no longer provide the jobs its residents need and so many have left, driven away by unemployment and the prospect of better opportunities elsewhere. For others, a rural life has a greater appeal and this tempts them to leave the city; living in the countryside typically affords lower property prices, healthier living and lower rates of crime.


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**Paragraph E**
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1 Too many people are moving to large cities.

- ◯ True
- ◯ False
- ◯ Not Given

2 Young Latvian adults would prefer to stay in their hometowns than move to the capital.

- ◯ True
- ◯ False
- ◯ Not Given

3 The birth rate in Christchurch is dropping.

- ◯ True
- ◯ False
- ◯ Not Given

4 Fewer people now work in factories in Flint.

- ◯ True
- ◯ False
- ◯ Not Given

5 Helen Dobson's internet is poor.

- ◯ True
- ◯ False
- ◯ Not Given


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