# UNIT 2: HEALTH

## A. READING

**Exercise 1: Read the information. Then complete the sentences. Use the suffixes in the box.**

Texts in the IELTS test might include some scientific names, so it is good if you can recognise them. But don't worry: you won't be tested on your scientific knowledge!

| ate | gen | gen | ic | ide |
|---|---|---|---|---|

1 The gas that all people and animals need to breathe is called oxy _____ .

2 Nitr _____ is made of one atom of nitrogen and three of oxygen, and is often used as a fertiliser. Its molecular formula is $NO_3$.

3 An ox _____ is a compound containing oxygen and other chemical elements.

4 The chemical name for water is hydro _____ dioxide, or $H_20$.

5 The adjective nitr _____ is used to describe substances related to the gas nitrogen (N).

**Exercise 2: Complete the words with the correct suffixes. Use the suffixes in the box. One of the suffixes is used twice.**

| cian | gen | ide | ist | ity | tious |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

1 A person who rides a bike is a cycl _____ .

2 Most of the air around us consists of the gas nitro _____ .

3 Healthy food can be described as nutri _____ .

4 A fatal _____ is a death, especially one caused by an accident.

5 A person whose job is to run a country, region or city is a politi _____ .

6 Obes _____ is the problem caused by a person being overweight.

7 The chemical name for rust is iron ox _____ . $Fe_3O_4$ is one of its chemical formulas.



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**<u>Exercise 3:</u> Read the sentences. Then read the statements below about the sentences. Choose True, False or Not Given.**

***1*** *There has for many years been a consensus among medical professionals that a substantial number of people in the UK consume too much sugar.*

***2*** *Mrs Smith was advised by her GP that she was getting insufficient exercise.*

***3*** *According to a report by the National Health Service, 19% of British adults smoke.*

***4*** *In the USA, there has been a substantial increase in the number of young households who grow their own food.*

***5*** *India has more vegetarians than all of the rest of the world put together.*

***6*** *Few hospitals in the country offer a round-the-clock emergency service.*

1 Most people in the UK are believed to eat more sugar than they should.

- ◯ True
- ◯ False
- ◯ Not Given

2 Mrs Smith's doctor told her that that she wasn't exercising enough.

- ◯ True
- ◯ False
- ◯ Not Given

3 The National Health Service is critical of the UK's smokers.

- ◯ True
- ◯ False
- ◯ Not Given

4 More American households grow their own food now than a few years ago.

- ◯ True
- ◯ False
- ◯ Not Given



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4 More American households grow their own food now than a few years ago.

- ◯ True
- ◯ False
- ◯ Not Given

5 The majority of the world's vegetarians are from India.

- ◯ True
- ◯ False
- ◯ Not Given

6 There aren't many hospitals that are open 24 hours a day for emergencies.

- ◯ True
- ◯ False
- ◯ Not Given

**Exercise 4: Match the halves of the phrases.**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | cut down | ● | ● attack |
| 2 | rising levels of | ● | ● obesity |
| 3 | sugary | ● | ● in vegetables |
| 4 | a diet rich | ● | ● on soft drinks |
| 5 | a balanced | ● | ● diet |
| 6 | high blood | ● | ● drinks |
| 7 | heart | ● | ● pressure |

**Exercise 5: Read the information. Then read the sentences and choose the correct definitions of the words and phrases in bold.**

It is important to try to work out the meaning of an unfamiliar word from its context. Sometimes, it is possible to do this by looking at the sentence that the word is in. On other occasions, you will need to look at a larger section of the text, such as a whole paragraph.

1 I've just read an article about **superfoods** that apparently can do wonders for our bodies.

- ◯ delicious foods
- ◯ very healthy foods

2 If your diet is **rich in** fruits such as blueberries, you are less likely to suffer from heart disease.

- ◯ containing lots of
- ◯ costing a lot


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3 My family and I are making sure that everything we cook is really **nutritious** from now on – so that means lots of fish and vegetables.

- ◯ easy to cook
- ◯ healthy, giving energy to the body

4 As everyone needs a rich and **balanced** diet, we need to eat lots of different fruits and vegetables, and not the same ones all the time.

- ◯ containing lots of different kinds of food
- ◯ not causing weight gain

5 It is important to be able to recognise the symptoms of a **stroke** in case you witness someone suffering one. If someone suddenly has difficulty speaking and / or standing, you need to get them medical help immediately.

- ◯ brain attack, when the brain doesn't get enough blood
- ◯ mistake made by health professionals

6 The government has announced plans to reduce spending on **healthcare**, which has led to criticism from health professionals, who say that most hospitals and surgeries in the country will be adversely affected.

- ◯ medical help for people that is provided by doctors, hospitals, etc.
- ◯ training for medical professionals

**Exercise 6: Read the information. Then read the questions and scan the article to choose the correct answers.**

Scanning a text is a very useful skill for the IELTS Reading test. Basically, it involves looking for something specific in a text, such as a name.

To scan, just move your eyes over the text – you should be able to do this faster than your usual reading speed – and stop when you find what you are looking for. You can then read that small part of the text more carefully.

In this exercise, you will practise scanning a text.

**The advent of sugar taxes**

Recent years have seen a series of countries, from the UK to South Africa, debate and then introduce a tax on products that are high in sugar. Mexico implemented a much-publicised sugar tax soon after France did in 2012, which was in itself a response to Hungary's pioneering new tax the previous year. Other countries, such as Ireland, soon followed suit.

So, what does it take for a country to take a stand against falling standards of health and rising levels of obesity and introduce a sugar tax that will make a difference? Well, the first thing is that people need to be made to care. Many British people had been hearing their doctor tell them for years about the dangers of consuming too much sugar. However, it took


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an all-out offensive by a chef, with the media looking on enthusiastically, to raise awareness and bring the issue to the forefront of national debate in the UK before the average politician would sit up and listen.

Once passed, sugar taxes can have quite a drastic effect. In Mexico, the introduction of a tax of 10% made consumers think again about their shopping choices. Poorer households spent up to 17% less on sugary drinks and across all socioeconomic groups nationwide, the drop was 12%.

But the key benefit lies in the improvement in people's health and the fall in the number of diet-related fatalities that the introduction of a sugar tax could lead to. Estimates put this at 1,600 in Australia, and it is claimed that 4,400 heart attacks – a major cause of death – and 1,100 strokes could be prevented each and every year. The revenues generated by the tax are expected to be in the region of $400 million, not to mention the reduction in costly healthcare needed, providing the government with a fund to subsidise healthy food for low-income Australians.

1 Give yourself 20 seconds to scan the article and find all the countries mentioned. Then, without looking at the article again, identify the seven countries mentioned from the list below.

- ☐ Australia
- ☐ Austria
- ☐ France
- ☐ Hungary
- ☐ Mexico
- ☐ Morocco
- ☐ South Africa
- ☐ South Korea
- ☐ the UK
- ☐ the USA
- ☐ Ireland

2 Give yourself 40 seconds to scan the article and find all the numbers and what they refer to. Then, without looking at the article again, identify the three pieces of information that the article contains.

- ☐ the amount of money that one country expects to raise from its sugar tax
- ☐ the number of countries around the world that have imposed a sugar tax
- ☐ the percentage of people in favour of a sugar tax
- ☐ the tax rate (as a percentage) imposed by a country on sugary drinks
- ☐ the year when a country introduced a sugar tax


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**Exercise 7:** **Read the article again. Complete the sentences from a flow-chart. Choose NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS from the article for each answer.**

**How sugar taxes work**

- _____ : first country in recent years to introduce a sugar tax.

↓

- Popular support can be raised by a famous person. The campaign to introduce a sugar tax led by a _____ in the UK.

↓

- Introducing a sugar tax leads to a reduction in consumption of sugary drinks.

↓

- Mexico – spending on soft drinks fell by _____ overall.

↓

- Sugar taxes improve people's health.

↓

- _____ lives could be saved annually in Australia, where the money earned could be used to pay for _____.

**Exercise 8:** **Read the information. Then skim the text and choose the correct answers to complete the sentences.**

Skimming a text means reading it quickly to get the main idea(s). To skim, you don't need to read the whole text. For example, you could just read the first sentence (topic sentence) of each paragraph. A lot of people find this a useful way to start when doing an IELTS Reading task.

In this exercise, you're going to practise skimming a text. The questions in this exercise are intended to help you practise skim-reading. They are NOT intended to resemble the actual IELTS Reading test. You'll see some IELTS Reading style questions in the following exercise.

| **Superfoods** |
|---|



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*Investigative journalist Bjorn Stigsson looks into the science of the so-called 'superfoods'.*

Health bloggers are constantly going on about the so-called superfoods that can do wonders for our bodies, or so it is claimed. If you believe all the hype, you'll probably believe that a diet of mackerel and broccoli can make you live forever!

So, let's investigate the claims, and see if the science really backs them up. Curry is said to be a superfood, and the magical power it lays claim to is that it can help extend life. At least, that's what someone has decided on the basis of what happened to a few rats in a laboratory somewhere, which had a diet rich in capsaicin. Curry also contains a high amount of capsaicin, and so it wasn't long before someone concluded that, therefore, humans would live longer if they ate lots of curry. As for the evidence, oh, well, never mind that – unsubstantiated claims are much more headline-friendly. And so it wasn't long before a chef in Bedford, UK, hit the headlines when he claimed to have created the world's healthiest meal – chicken curry with blueberries. He claimed that, being loaded with antibacterials, it could deal 'a devastating blow' to cancer. Could it simply be, I wonder, that he just wanted to go one better than his competitor businesses in Bedford?

Another superfood is beetroot, which is rich in nitrates that can be converted into nitric oxide. It is believed that people with higher-than-average blood pressure who eat beetroot are able to reduce it to healthier levels, although evidence gathered from people with heart problems is very limited. In addition, there is some good data on the benefits of beetroot, but much of it focuses on people with excellent health, such as the cyclists who were the participants in a well-received piece of research from 2013. This established that a diet rich in beetroot enabled them to cope better with the lower oxygen levels at high altitudes. These findings are of use to climbers and mountain residents alike.

It's been said that if you're going to make just one change to your diet, it should be to start eating blueberries. They're rich in fibre and vitamin K, but then so are many other things. It's their levels of antioxidants that really set them apart, which may be one of the reasons why people who eat them a lot are less prone to heart disease. Studies conducted among women aged over 70 who had not had a stroke also found that memory loss was delayed by a couple of years on average among the blueberry-eaters. However, before we jump to conclusions, it should also be pointed out that the sample size was very modest and that berry-eaters tend to have above-average incomes, which in turn can contribute to good health.

So, do I believe that some foods really are 'superfoods'? No. Some foods, such as broccoli and mackerel, are more nutritious than others such as bread. And we all need a rich and balanced diet, so do by all means cook up some broccoli now and then, but don't live on it exclusively. And don't delude yourself into thinking that it'll save your life – eating so-called superfoods is a solution, but it's not *the* solution.


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1 The writer's main point is that people should ...

- ◯ be sceptical about claims made about superfoods.
- ◯ try to eat as many superfoods as possible.

2 The writer's tone is best described as ...

- ◯ humorous and light-hearted.
- ◯ serious and academic.

**Exercise 9: Read the passage again and complete the table. Choose NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS from the passage for each answer.**

| superfood | key component | claim | evidence |
|---|---|---|---|
| curry | capsaicin | It can extend life.<br>It can defeat _____ . | It enables _____ to live longer. |
| beetroot | _____ | It can lower _____ . | A group of _____ were found to perform better at high altitudes. |
| blueberries | _____ | They can slow _____ . | Results are inconclusive, because the participants who performed well in tests also had high _____ . |



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