

B. READING

Exercise 1 :

Read the information. Then decide whether the statements are Opinion or Fact. Choose the correct answers.



In the IELTS Reading test, you might be asked to identify opinions and theories in a passage. These are people's beliefs, or attempts to explain something, and are not the same as facts. Facts are things that are known to be true.

- 1 According to a recent survey, 65% of young people would like to study in a foreign country.
 Opinion Fact

- 2 Approximately one in three people who take part in voluntary activities say that it has made them feel better about themselves.
 Opinion Fact

- 3 Professor Mark Thompson believes that people from wealthy backgrounds tend to volunteer more than people from poorer ones.
 Opinion Fact

- 4 It has been proven that the main reason people volunteer is to help other people, although some people also do it in order to try a new experience.
 Opinion Fact

- 5 'Instead of making people busier and more tired, taking part in voluntary activities may actually help decrease people's stress levels,' comments Clara Coleman, a researcher at Princeford University.
 Opinion Fact

- 6 'Employers don't appreciate people who do volunteer work alongside their normal jobs,' suggests Joel Gateman.
 Opinion Fact

Exercise 2 :

In the IELTS Reading test, it is useful to be able to identify the reporting verbs used in a passage when looking for facts and opinions. Read the information. Then write the reporting verbs in the statements in the gaps.

Reading passages often report the opinions of other people. Look out for reporting verbs such as *say*, *think* and *believe*. It is important to understand that what a person says, thinks or writes is not always a fact, even if the person is an expert, and believes what they say to be true.

- 1 Professor Mark Thompson believes that people from wealthy backgrounds volunteer more than people from poorer ones. _____
- 2 'Instead of making people busier and more tired, taking part in voluntary activities may actually help decrease people's stress levels,' comments Clare Coleman, a researcher at Princeford University. _____
- 3 'Employers don't appreciate people who do volunteer work alongside their normal jobs,' suggests Joel Gateman. _____
- 4 Rachel Jones, who volunteered with refugees for three months, thinks that her experience was challenging but rewarding. _____
- 5 Paula Orman, the organiser of the survey, claims that more people should consider voluntary work. _____

Exercise 3 :

In the IELTS Reading test, you may be asked to understand someone's attitude. Read the information. Then decide whether the people's opinions are Positive or Negative. Choose the correct options.

Understanding someone's *attitude* means identifying how someone thinks or feels about something. For example, they might have a positive or a negative attitude towards something.

- 1 Rachel Jones, a young volunteer, says, 'It's terrible that the government isn't doing enough to help refugees. (Positive/ Negative)
- 2 Volunteering can have a beneficial effect on people. Clare Coleman agrees: 'It can make people feel less depressed.' (Positive/ Negative)
- 3 Some people are not optimistic. Joel Gateman speculates that people will have less time to volunteer in years to come because they will be working longer hours. (Positive/ Negative)
- 4 'Far from being a waste of time, most people find voluntary work increases their job prospects,' claims Professor Mark Thompson. (Positive/ Negative)
- 5 Paula Orman believes that more people are viewing voluntary work as a valuable activity, which helps society in general. (Positive/ Negative)

Exercise 4 :

Read the information. Then look at the opinions with the key words underlined. Read the paraphrased statements and match the people with their opinions.



In the IELTS Reading test, you might be asked to find someone's opinion in a passage. You will be given statements, paraphrasing that person's opinion, which will be written in a shorter, different way.

- Rachel Jones, a young volunteer, says, 'It's terrible that the government isn't doing enough to help refugees.'
- Volunteering can have a beneficial effect on people. Clare Coleman agrees: 'It can make people feel less depressed.'
- Some people are not optimistic. Joel Gateman speculates that people will have less time to volunteer in years to come because they will be working longer hours.
- 'Far from being a waste of time, most people find voluntary work increases their job prospects,' claims Professor Mark Thompson.
- Paula Orman believes that more people are viewing voluntary work as a valuable activity which helps society in general.

Clare Coleman

Joel Gateman

Mark Thompson

Paula Orman

Rachel Jones

1 If a person takes part in voluntary activities, it is good for the larger area in which they live.

2 The people who are officially in charge of the country should do more to help people.

3 People will not have much free time in the future to spend helping others.

4 Volunteering can improve someone's chances of finding paid work.

5 People who do voluntary work feel more positive about life.

Exercise 5: You are going to practise an IELTS Reading task. First, skim read the passage quickly to get a general understanding of it. Then look at the list of researchers and quickly scan the passage to find their names. Choose the paragraphs where the researchers' opinions appear.

How young volunteers are making a difference

1 In a recent survey, thousands of young people were asked about their generation's attitudes to helping others, and what they thought about volunteering and charity work. The results were interesting and surprised the organisers. The survey revealed that most young people were, in comparison with their parents and grandparents, far more concerned about issues such as homelessness, the environment and crime. The rising number of young people who participate in voluntary work seems to support this. 'This increase goes against the negative stereotype that some older people have of teenagers and young adults,' suggests Professor Josh McKinnon, one of the organisers. 'They think younger people are selfish, but this seems not to be the case. They actually want to help and do something positive for the community. Unfortunately, many charities have the same wrong idea and don't bother to find ways to recruit young people.'

2 On the 4th September 2010, an earthquake struck the city of Christchurch in New Zealand. Not only was there a great deal of damage to offices and homes, but many roads were made unusable. This was because the earthquake had turned solid earth into a liquid form – a process known as ‘liquefaction’. Many New Zealanders watched the news on television feeling like there was nothing they could do to help.

3 Sam Johnson, a 22-year-old local, felt differently. He used social media to contact his friends, asking them to help. The next day, over 150 students turned up to a Christchurch suburb and began clearing up the muddy earth. Local residents were amazed but also incredibly grateful. So what was it that made Johnson step up, and other young students rush to assist? Professor McKinnon comments that age was an important factor: ‘In some situations where urgent action is required, older people often think, “That’s terrible, I hope the government does something about it.” But younger people don’t share the same feelings. They’re much quicker to go and get involved and do something to help.’

4 In February 2012, Christchurch suffered an even more serious earthquake, and Johnson organised a much bigger group of young volunteers. In the period that followed, he was leading around 13,000 volunteers a week. They cleaned up 360,000 tons of liquefaction, handed out food and water, helped people install emergency toilets and distributed information. One thing that really helped was some of Sam’s friends’ technical abilities. The apps they created to help organise the other volunteers meant that they worked efficiently and effectively. ‘This is the kind of thing that many established charities should be paying attention to,’ observes Tom Hordern, a lecturer in social politics. ‘Today’s young generation use digital platforms to raise money and encourage other people to contribute their time, bring in food or clothes and so on. This is an approach that works really well. Some forward-thinking charities have begun to realise this and are deliberately hiring younger staff.’ Today Sam Johnson is still active in helping other people in need. Together with other key members of his volunteer group, he is setting up volunteer structures around the world and encouraging other people to help, for example in Japan and the USA.

5 Other young people are volunteering in ways that aren’t as high-profile as Sam Johnson, but which still make a difference. From cleaning parks to baking cakes to raise money for new computers in schools, young volunteers are taking the lead in improving their communities. Nadia Paxman, author of *Community Minded*, believes that this is significant: ‘This is what large charities need to understand. They forget that young people have limited time. They have school commitments, so you can’t expect them to work for the charity every weekend for a whole year. Charities need to adjust and consider how young people can help in small ways, or take part in volunteer events occasionally.’

6 Paxman is sure that volunteering can have a positive effect. She speculates that if young people are given the chance to volunteer in small ways, and find the experience positive and

rewarding, there is a high probability that in years to come they will participate in other volunteering activities. These will be more demanding and time-consuming, and are the ones that charities need most help with.

7 Young people volunteer for a number of different reasons. In the USA, for example, young people report that they consider doing voluntary work not only because they are passionate about a particular cause, but also because they feel that it will increase their employment prospects and they will gain skills that potential employers will find attractive. Nadia Paxman agrees: 'By working with, say, the elderly or with dyslexic students, teenagers can develop a number of skills: effective communication, time management, teamwork. What's important is that the charity they are working for helps them to recognise their achievements, and shows them how to reflect on what they've learnt. It's something that can go on their résumé.'

8 Hordern highlights a different way in which young people can benefit from volunteer work, referring to a group of 16-year-olds in his daughter's high school. They have been helping out with the homework of young migrants whose first language isn't English. Hordern says that the experience is 'positive on both sides'. It seems that after helping out the younger children, the older ones feel better about their own abilities and value themselves more. 'The experience has shown them that they can make a difference. Their role in society isn't just going to school.'

List of researchers

A Josh McKinnon

B Tom Hordern

C Nadia Paxman

Josh McKinnon's opinions appear in paragraphs _____ and _____.

Tom Hordern's opinions appear in paragraphs _____ and _____.

Nadia Paxman's opinions appear in paragraphs _____, _____ and _____.

Exercise 6: Choose the correct researcher (A–C) for each statement. You may choose any researcher more than once.

List of researchers

A Josh McKinnon

B Tom Hordern

C Nadia Paxman

1 The way young people help charities increase different types of donation is very effective.

A

B

C

2 It's important that charities help young people clearly understand and describe their achievements.

A

B

C

3 Young people are more willing to take immediate action in emergency situations than older adults.

A

B

C

4 Young people are more interested in contributing to society than some charities realise.

A

B

C

5 Charities need to be more flexible with regard to the kind of volunteering opportunities they offer.

A

B

C

Exercise 7. Complete the sentences with the correct endings in the box.

are likely to improve their chances of finding a good job.

are more interested in social problems than previous generations.

are now involved in organising others interested in volunteering elsewhere.

are very likely to take part in bigger volunteering projects in the future.

find that their levels of self-confidence improve.

may form relationships that will be useful later on.

may go on to work for charities or voluntary organisations full-time.

will require more training than charities tend to provide.

- 1 A recent survey has shown that young people

- 2 Some young people who volunteered to help in Christchurch in 2012

- 3 According to Paxman, young people who have had a positive experience of volunteering

- 4 In the USA, young people feel that by doing voluntary work they

- 5 School-aged volunteers who work with migrants

Exercise 8. To complete the IELTS Reading task you had to recognise paraphrases in order to complete the sentences. Read the sentences and look at the phrases in bold. Then match the paraphrases from the Reading passage with the sentences.

far more concerned about issues such as homelessness, the environment and crime

feel better about their own abilities and value themselves more

setting up volunteer structures around the world and encouraging other people to help

there is a high probability that in years to come, they will participate

they feel that it will increase their employment prospects

- 1 A recent survey has shown that young people **are more interested in social problems** than previous generations.

- 2 Some young people who volunteered to help in Christchurch in 2012 are now **involved in organising others interested in volunteering elsewhere.**

- 3 According to Paxman, young people who have had a positive experience of volunteering are **very likely to take part in bigger volunteering projects in the future.**

- 4 In the USA, young people feel that by doing voluntary work they are likely to **improve their chances of finding a good job.**

- 5 School-aged volunteers who work with migrants find that **their levels of self-confidence improve.**