IELTS Practice Reading Test

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Haiku

Haiku is a traditional form of Japanese poetry that typically consists of three lines and is used as a means of expressing emotions and capturing moments of life in a brief and impactful way. Haiku has a concise and minimalist format of verse that often focuses on nature, but can be applied to any subject matter.

During the Edo period, haiku gained popularity among Japanese poets. Matsuo Basho, a renowned haiku master, is the one we can thank for popularizing haiku as a standalone form of poetry. Basho was part of a group of poets known as the Haikai no Renga. This group was founded in the 16th century and concerned itself with poetry that was humorous and entertaining. Prior to him, haikus were mostly a preface to renga, a collaborative poem, and referred to as hokku. After Basho's death, other poets continued the haiku tradition, and it became a staple of Japanese literature. In the late 19th century, haiku was introduced to the Western world, where it quickly gained popularity as a form of poetry.

The most basic form of haiku consists of three lines that follow a specific syllable count of 5-7-5 for the first, second, and third lines respectively, coming to 17 syllables – the number the original haiku poem has to adhere to. This syllable count is not meant to be a limitation, but rather a guiding structure to create a concise and powerful poem. The idea of seasons is of great importance in haiku, and it often employs the use of seasonal words, or kigo, to indicate the season or time of year where the poem takes place. These words can be simple, such as "cherry blossom" for spring or "snow" for winter, or more abstract, such as "uncertainty" for autumn or "emptiness" for winter. The third and the last line of a haiku often contains a surprising or unexpected twist, known as a kireji or cutting word, which shifts the idea or deepens the meaning of the poem. This word can also create a sense of pause or separation between the two parts of the haiku.

Haiku proved to have significant influence on other schools of poetry. One of the major themes is its emphasis on sensory detail. Haiku-inspired poets often use vivid images to describe the world around them, from the sound of a frog jumping into a pond to the feel of a cool breeze on the skin, all through careful phrasing. This might be contrasted with the previously popular themes of inner monologue and emotional component that would be central to the work of poetry. Another impactful change was giving more attention to precise language. Because haiku must convey its message within a limited number of syllables, each word must be carefully chosen for its meaning and impact. Being frugal with words and using them sparingly contributes to a clearer vision of the message. In Western interpretation, one does not necessarily limit oneself to the original 17 syllables.

The scope of impact, however, was not limited to literature alone. Visual artists in the West have always been fascinated by the delicate balance of the natural environment and its harmonious coexistence with humanity. Haiku, with its focus on nature and its spiritual essence has provided a rich source of inspiration for artists around the world. One notable example is Vasiliy Kandinsky, who was growing increasingly concerned with the elitism surrounding art and how it was

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distancing itself from the common folk through unnecessary complexity. He admired haiku's sheer simplicity and how its core principles could find application in various forms of art, making it more accessible for everyone.

Haiku has also impacted the art of photography. Photographers have used the principles of haiku to create images that capture the essence of a moment. One famous example is Dorothea Lange's photograph of a migrant mother and her children during the Great Depression. The photograph captures the sadness and desperation of the time and is a perfect example of how photography can be used to convey emotion.

Another noteworthy thing about haiku is that they were an integral part of the samurai's existence. Samurai culture is known for its stoicism, honour, and respect; therefore, they were expected to maintain their composure in all circumstances and display their bravery through action rather than words. One of the many things a samurai had to learn was to compose haikus, which provided an outlet for the samurai to express their innermost thoughts and feelings. They were believed to strengthen their spirits, sharpen their minds, and make the hardships of duty more bearable. Samurai poets mostly explored the concept of nature and death in their haiku poetry. Death in Samurai culture was not feared but celebrated. It was seen as an honourable end to a life lived with integrity and courage. Samurai poets wrote about death as an acceptance of the inevitability of life, celebrating life's brevity and the transience of things, all of these perfectly reflecting the idea of haiku.

In today's fast-paced world, haiku has become more important than ever. With so much noise and distraction, it can be hard to appreciate the simple beauty of the world around us. Haiku encourages us to slow down and take a moment to cherish the small things in life, like the changing of seasons, the beauty of a sunrise or a sunset, and the simple pleasures of a walk in the park. So next time you find yourself idling in the park, give haiku a try. Remember that all you need to do is take your time, have a close look at things and people surrounding you, and sum it up in the frugal manner of 17 syllables.

Questions 1-6. Do the following statements agree with the information in Reading Passage 1? In boxes **1-4** on your Answer Sheet, write

> **TRUE** if the statement is true according to the passage.
> **FALSE** if the statement contradicts the passage.
> **NOT GIVEN** if there is no information about this in the passage.

1. Haiku has not always been an independent phenomenon

2. Matsuo Basho is credited with having created haiku

3. The purpose of haiku particular syllable pattern is to inspire more evocative poems

4. Haiku rhyming pattern is different from traditional Western poetry

5. In traditional haiku the number of syllables cannot exceed 17

6. The theme of seasonality is pivotal in haiku

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Questions 7-10. Complete the summary below. Choose **NO MORE THAN ONE WORD** from the passage for each answer.

Haiku appeals to the **7** _____ aspect of human sensation, aiming to recreate visual or audial experiences and at the same time deviating from the previously focal **8** _____ side of human life. Therefore the focus shifted from the internal world to that around us, the material objective reality. Another key feature of the Japanese verse was its strife for simplicity – partially due to its length, pushing the authors to brevity and concision. Stylistic direction of haiku prompted Kandinsky to reassess his approach to art and reduce its **9** _____, ultimately leading to him striving to make it equally **10** _____ for regular people and connoisseurs alike.

Questions 11-13. Choose the appropriate letters **A-C**.

11. Members of the samurai were encouraged to

A Display their courage

B Prioritise deeds over words

C Compose haiku poems

12. Haiku poetry and samurai culture are similar in that they

A Welcome hardship and struggle

B Focus on the theme of nature and death

C See death as a natural stage of life

13. Today haiku hasn't lost its popularity

A because its message might be more relevant than ever before.

B due to how effortless it is to compose.

C as it focuses on the environment.

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Metallurgy

Metallurgy is the scientific study of the properties of metals as well as extracting and refining them into useful products. It has been an important part of human civilization for thousands of years and played a critical role in the development of modern industry. History of metallurgy is a fascinating tale of human ingenuity, from the earliest days of metalworking to the cutting-edge technologies of today.

The first proven evidence of attempts at metallurgy dates back to around 5000 BCE, when copper was first used for making tools and ornaments. The discovery of this metal was groundbreaking for humanity, as it allowed us to create more effective and durable tools. The use of copper also heralded the beginning of the Bronze Age, when people saw the development of more sophisticated metalworking techniques. The earliest metal objects from the Bronze Age were still cast from copper, which was extracted from ore deposits in the earth. Copper is relatively soft and malleable, making it easy to hammer or cast into new shapes. However, it all came at a cost. It was not firm enough for warfare applications like weapons or heavy armor – it would bend easily when hit. As a result, this reddish metal was mostly reserved for civilian needs. This is why the discovery of bronze was so significant.

Bronze, a new kind of alloy made by combining copper with tin, was much harder than pure copper while also having better resistance to corrosion. The formula for making bronze was developed during the early Bronze Age, when it is believed that the mixing of copper and tin started. The Bronze Age spanned several thousand years – from around 3000 BCE to 1000 BCE – and saw the rise of many early civilizations, including Egypt, Mesopotamia, and the Indus Valley. These societies were built on the foundation of metallurgy, enabling them to create complex machines, build monumental architecture, even facilitate waging wars against their enemies. Bronze allowed people to reach an unprecedented level of accuracy and sophistication in creating various tools.

The process of making bronze was not as straightforward as 'heat, mix and stir'. This was an arduous process that took lots of time and patience. The ores were first broken up into small pieces, then roasted in a furnace to drive off impurities. Once the ore had been purified, it was combined with other metals, such as iron or zinc, to create alloys with unique properties. The resulting material was then utilised to create a cast bronze object using the lost-wax technique: making a mould of the object in wax, followed by filling the cavity with molten bronze. Metalworkers had to be proficient in a range of different techniques, including forging, casting, and hammering.

The next major milestone in the history of metallurgy was the discovery of iron smelting, which, interestingly, occurred independently in different parts of the world around 1000 BCE. Iron was much more abundant and easier to work with than copper or bronze, quickly becoming the preferred metal for multiple applications. The Iron Age saw the rise of many new empires and the spread of iron technology across the globe, notably in the Roman Empire, the Han Dynasty in China, the Mauryan Empire in India. During the Middle Ages metallurgy continued to advance, with the development of new approaches for refining gold, silver and other precious metals. The creation of new alloys like brass and pewter also became more common, as did the use of metals

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in medicine. In the early modern period, metallurgy played a critical role in the development of modern science.

Probably the most impactful point was the invention of the blast furnace. Developed in China around the 3rd century BCE, the blast furnace revolutionized metalworking allowing to produce cast iron on a large scale, kick-starting an even more revolutionary development – the steam engine – which in turn was one of the many breakthroughs that made the Industrial Revolution possible. The Industrial Revolution itself transformed metallurgy into a highly mechanized, even scientific discipline. One particular advance was the Bessemer converter, making mass-production of steel without the need for highly-skilled professionals a reality.

Before the Bessemer process, steel was primarily produced by heating iron ore in a charcoal fire and then hammering it to ensure the material was more uniform. This process, known as wrought iron production, was slow and labour-intensive, with the resulting material ending up not being as strong or durable as modern steel. The Bessemer converter involved blowing air through molten pig iron to burn off undesirable elements as well as to adjust the carbon content, which leads to a higher-quality, more uniform product. This approach was much faster while at the same time being more efficient than previous methods of steel production, and it quickly revolutionized the industry. The so-called Bessemer process was later improved upon with the introduction of new techniques such as the open-hearth process and the basic oxygen process. Today, we produce steel using a variety of methods, but the basic principles of the Bessemer process remain unchanged.

Nowadays, metallurgy is a vast field of study with many different branches and subfields: physical metallurgy, mineral processing, materials science and others. Advancements in production technologies, such as the use of computers, robot-controlled machines as well as automation in general, have made many previously prohibitively expensive things financially viable. Modern alloys are lightweight, strong, and resistant to corrosion – this is just the tip of the iceberg. Metallurgy is a testament to human ingenuity and the power of innovation. From the earliest days of copper smelting to the modern-day production of advanced alloys, metallurgy has been the cornerstone of human civilization. As we continue to push the boundaries of science, metallurgy will no doubt remain an important discipline. It is the tool that ensures we will be able to overcome whatever challenges we might face.

Questions 14-16. Choose the appropriate letters **A-C** and write them in boxes 14-16 on your answer sheet.

14 Copper was the metal of choice in the early days of metallurgy because of its

A Abundance

B Affordability

C Ease of shaping

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15 Military application of copper was limited because the material

A wasn't strong enough

B found use for more peaceful purposes

C proved to be too bulky

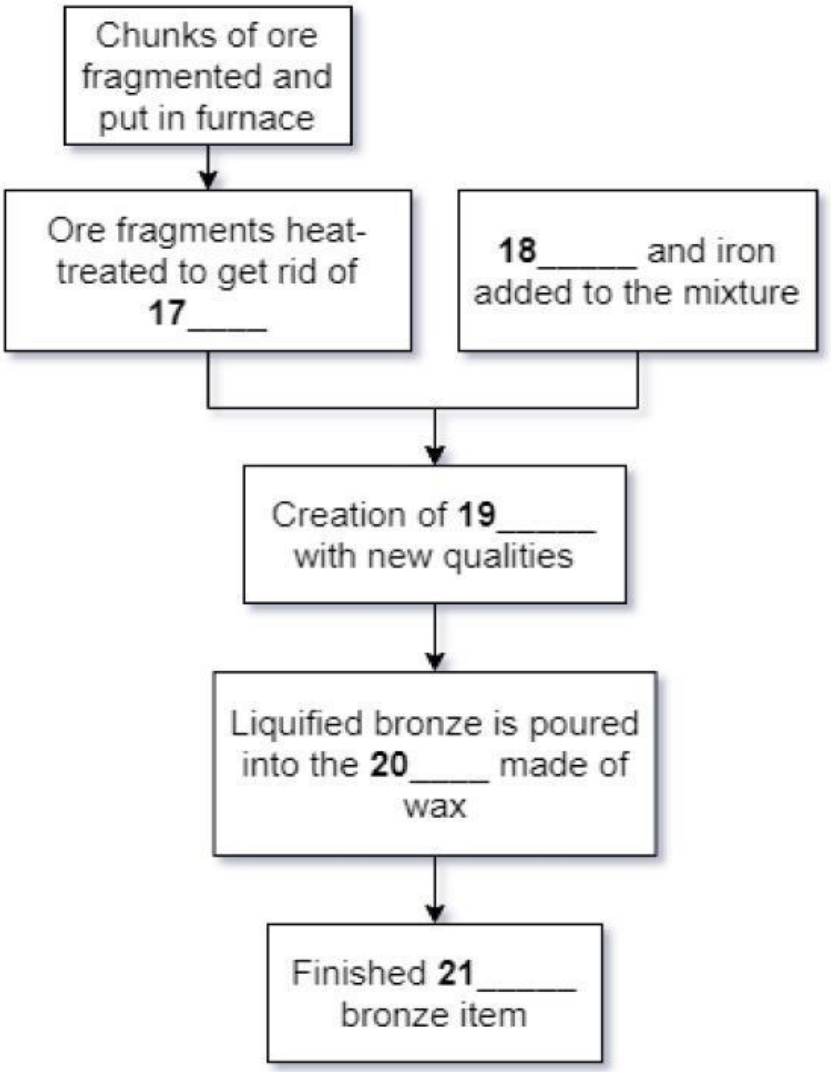
16 One of the advantages bronze has over copper is

A being less prone to rusting

B having tin in it

C its wide use in architecture

Questions 17-21. Complete the flow-chart. Choose **ONE WORD ONLY** from the passage for each answer.



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Questions 22-27. Do the following statements agree with the information given in Reading Passage 2? For questions **22-27**, 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 statement

22 Iron smelting was invented in the Roman Empire

23 Blast furnace was one of the biggest breakthroughs of the Industrial Revolution

24 The invention of steel alloy was made possible thanks to the Bessemer converter.

25 The Bessemer process made the output material quality more consistent.

26 The introduction of machinery in the process of metal making helped reduce production costs

27 It is unlikely that metallurgy will lose its significance in the future

Singapore – a city like no other

A

Singapore, a land of contrasts and contradictions, is a canvas painted with the vibrant hues of multiculturalism, innovation and natural beauty. A place where towering skyscrapers and lush greenery coexist in perfect harmony, it is an urban masterpiece that never fails to captivate and inspire. This city-state nestled on the southern tip of the Malay Peninsula is a tapestry of diverse cultures, each adding their own unique thread to the fabric of Singaporean society. From the bustling streets of Chinatown to the ornate mosques of Kampong Glam and the colourful temples of Little India, Singapore is a kaleidoscope of sights, sounds, and flavors that tantalize the senses. With a population of approximately 5.7 million people, it is one of the most densely populated countries in the world, only surpassed by Macau and Monaco. Despite its small size, Singapore is a thriving and prosperous nation, known for its cleanliness, safety, and economic success.

B

While certain archaeological evidence suggests that the history of Singapore dates back to the early 13th century, bearing the name of Temasek, a small trading port, the well-documented period of this country only starts in 1819 when colonisation by the British Empire took place. Because of its strategic location at the southern tip of the peninsula, it was a natural hub for trade between China, India, and the Indonesian archipelago. Chinese junks, Indian dhows, and Malay proas would all converge on its shores to exchange goods and ideas. Naturally, it was a very lucrative territory to have control over. Sir Stamford Raffles, a British colonialist and explorer was aware of the country's potential as a trading center but wary of its perceived lawlessness. At the time, Singapore was known for its shady reputation. Pirates, smugglers, and other unsavoury characters were said to lurk in its waters, ready to pounce on unsuspecting ships. Raffles' approach to the issue was rather unconventional for the time. He implemented a policy of offering clemency to pirates who surrendered and gave up their criminal activities. This policy was designed to encourage pirates to abandon their criminal ways and become productive members of society.

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Raffles also established a system of licensing and regulation for boats and ships to ensure that they were not involved in piracy.

C

Under British rule, Singapore flourished. It became one of the busiest ports in the world, handling everything from spices and textiles to opium and slaves. Its population grew rapidly as people from all over Asia and beyond flocked to its shores in search of work and opportunities. By the early 20th century, Singapore had transformed into a modern city-state with a thriving economy. But Singapore's road to success was not without challenges. World War II was perhaps the darkest chapter in its history. When the Japanese invaded it in 1942, they unleashed a wave of terror and brutality that left thousands dead and the city in ruins. The British, who were in charge of defending Singapore, were caught off guard and quickly overwhelmed. Despite having a larger number of troops, the British were poorly equipped and trained, so they were unable to stop the Japanese advance. On February 15, 1942, Lieutenant-General Arthur Percival, the British commander in Singapore, surrendered the island to the Japanese. The fall of Singapore was a major blow to the Allied war effort in the Pacific. It remained under Japanese control until the end of the war. In 1945, after Japan's surrender, the British returned and resumed control of the colony. Singapore gained its sovereignty in 1965.

D

The rest, as the well-known adage goes, is history. The tropical city-state grew from strength to strength, becoming a prosperous and stable nation in a volatile region. One of the key factors contributing to the country's rapid development is its location, which makes it a hub for trade and commerce. The country's strategic location, stable political environment, well-developed infrastructure, and strong workforce make it a popular destination for global investors. It has consistently been recognized as one of the easiest places to do business in the world and is ranked second in the World Bank's Doing Business 2020 report. Overall, investment-friendly environment is supported by the government's pro-business stance, including attractive tax incentives as well as transparent regulations. Another important element vital to Singapore's success is its government's zero tolerance for crime or misbehaviour. The country is known for its strict laws, particularly when it comes to public order and laws related to garbage disposal. The latter is what probably made Singapore known to many people, as fines for littering can exceed thousands of dollars, with repeat offenders facing corrective labour. Singapore's stringent approach is even more unforgiving to so-called DUI, or driving under the influence of alcohol or other substances. Sentences for that can include prison time for up to 12 months in addition to hefty fines. Possession of drugs is seen as one of the most heinous crimes – a person whose guilt has been proven might be subjected to capital punishment.

E

Singapore of today is one huge sight to behold. Some of its parts stand out in particular, the most famous and iconic being the Marina Bay Sands resort, which includes a hotel, casino, and shopping mall. The resort is built on reclaimed land and features a spectacular infinity pool that overlooks the city. Another one is the Merlion, a popular tourist attraction that is a statue of a mythical creature that is half-lion and half-fish. Despite its small size, Singapore is also home to a number of world-class museums and cultural institutions. The National Gallery of Singapore, for example, is housed in the former Supreme Court Building and City Hall and features a collection of Singaporean and Southeast Asian art. Ultimately, Singapore's success story is a result of the resilience, hard work, and ingenuity of its people, who have worked tirelessly to build a modern

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and prosperous nation. With its impeccably clean, well-planned streets, governmental efficiency, and attractive business climate, the place is a shining example of what can be achieved when a country is committed to progress and development. Whether you're a first-time visitor or a long-time resident, Singapore is a city that never fails to amaze and inspire.

Questions 28-32. Reading Passage 3 has five paragraphs (**A-E**). Choose the most suitable heading for each paragraph from the list below.

List of Headings
I A bumpy road
II Business is everything
III Simply the best
IV Rich in many things
V Trading favours
VI Worth looking up to
VII Successful policies

28 Paragraph A

29 Paragraph B

30 Paragraph C

31 Paragraph D

32 Paragraph E

Questions 33-36. Do the following statements agree with the information in Reading Passage 1? In boxes **1-4** on your Answer Sheet, write

TRUE if the statement is true according to the passage.
FALSE if the statement contradicts the passage.
NOT GIVEN if there is no information about this in the passage.

33 Cultural composition of Singapore is mostly homogeneous

34 There aren't many historical records on the earlier period of Singapore history.

35 The British empire came to Singapore to ensure its safety from piracy

36 As per Raffles' initiative, sea vessels had to have a license to be involved in trade

Questions 37-40. Complete the summary below using words from the table. Each can only be used once.

British rule	leaving	pirates	littering
economy	climate	illegal trade	practices
World War II	location	breaking the law	conditions

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Despite the grave losses the country had to experience due to **37** _____, resilience and determination paved its way for economic prosperity. Thanks to its favourable **38** _____ that connected trade routes and accommodating business environment it attracted professionals and investors from all across the globe. To stop people from **39** _____ the country has instituted stringent legal repercussions to ensure peace and order. This is one reason Singapore is lauded as one of the safest places to live. As a tourism destination, the city-state stands out with its many attractions like hotels and museums. Summing up, owing to its thriving **40** _____, efficient laws, and welcoming, inclusive culture, it is definitely a place worth seeing.

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