

Strategies to improve your Reading

Remember, no score is awarded for a candidate's ability to read the passages; rather, the test is assessed on your ability to locate and extract information within a given time and accurately answer the questions. As such, it's not necessary to understand all the words in the test.

Strategy # 1 – Skim to get a quick idea of what the passage is about:

Quickly look at the passage so that you're not attempting to answer the questions unfamiliar with the subject or the type of reading passage. However, you must not spend more than **1 minute** in total on this strategy. That's because this step doesn't answer any questions.

- A)** Firstly, read the passage title and subheading if there is one.
- B)** Very quickly run your eyes over the passage, do not begin to read it, only familiarize yourself with what the reading is. You may then want to go straight to the questions.
- C)** If you want to get more of a general idea of the passage, read only the first and last sentence of two or three paragraphs.

Strategy # 2 – Read the questions first and underline key words.

This is the most important strategy that can improve your score and help you answer the questions accurately. This strategy saves you time and prevents your mind from collecting and trying to remember too much information all at once.

- A)** For each question section, read the questions and underline key words (for the CD test, select the text with the mouse and right click to highlight). Then, go to the reading passage to locate the keywords (or their synonyms/paraphrase) and read around them to find the answer. Do this one question at a time.
- B)** As soon as you find the answer, add it to the your answer sheet or mark the question on screen. The answers must all be completed within the one hour, there is no extra time.
- C)** Take a few seconds to be certain about your spelling and grammar, as even a logically correct answer would not get a mark due to mistakes.

Strategy # 3 – Attempt one reading passage at a time:

Do not make the classic mistake of trying to answer a few questions of passage 1 and then when finding it difficult, skip to the second and then the third passages. You're likely to get confused and possibly anxious, especially in an intense exam situation.

The best advice is that you spend up to 20 minutes on the first passage trying to answer all the questions, and when finished or having spent that time, move on to the second passage and so on. You can go back to previous passages to revise your answers if you have any time left.

Strategy # 4 – Spend no more than 1 minute per question:

You have one hour to complete all three passages; therefore, good time management is essential.

Remember, there will be band 9 questions that you may not be able to answer, that's not a problem unless you need a band 9. The critical point here is that you don't waste precious time trying to find an impossible answer.

By training your-self to only spend around a minute per question you will avoid this common mistake, practice it and you'll find 1 minute is actually a comfortable amount of time to locate the answers that you're able to do.

When you've finished you can use the time saved to go back to those more difficult questions and re-attempt them. Never leave a blank answer.

Strategy # 5 – Get good at scanning.

Scanning is an essential skill as you won't have the time to understand the passages by reading them word for word. You simply move your eyes across the text smoothly in a wave like motion to find the keywords. Scanning is when you want to find specific information or meaning. The test will always use synonyms and paraphrasing, so sometimes they will be what you need to scan for. Then, once you've located the key words, read around them to find the answer.