

# IELTS Reading Hacks (20+ Expert Tips)

1. Skim first, don't read in detail

Read the passage quickly (1–2 minutes) to understand the general topic, tone, and structure.

2. Focus on keywords – especially names, dates, numbers

These are easier to spot and help you locate answers faster.

3. Don't read every word

IELTS Reading is a speed test. Use skimming and scanning strategically.

4. Questions usually follow the order of the text

Except for matching headings and some matching features.

5. Paraphrasing is everything

IELTS rarely repeats words exactly – learn synonym patterns.

6. For True/False/Not Given:

TRUE = same meaning

FALSE = opposite meaning

NOT GIVEN = no clear info

Avoid using your personal knowledge.

7. For Yes/No/Not Given (author's opinion):

Look for words showing attitude: believes, claims, argues, states, etc.

8. Matching headings:

Read the first and last sentence of each paragraph – they often carry the main idea.

9. Use elimination aggressively

If an option obviously doesn't fit, delete it immediately.

10. Predict the type of word needed

For gap-fills, decide if it should be a noun, verb, adjective, or number before scanning.

11. Time management is critical

Spend:

20 minutes Passage 1

20 minutes Passage 2

20 minutes Passage 3

12. Practice under exam conditions

60 minutes for 40 questions – no extra writing time.

13. Don't panic if a paragraph is difficult

Move on and return later; answers aren't equally weighted.

14. Always follow answer instructions

"ONE WORD ONLY" means exactly that.

15. Improve speed by reading academic content daily

Science, environment, research, psychology = common IELTS topics.

16. For matching features/questions:

Highlight the list of options first – they won't be in order in the text.

17. Spelling and grammar must be 100% correct

One mistake = zero points for that question.

18. Avoid overthinking

IELTS answers are direct, not creative interpretations.

19. Use the structure of the text

Headings, topic sentences, and connectors (however, therefore, in addition) guide you.

20. Understand distractors

IELTS includes misleading sentences like:

“Some scientists believe...”

“Earlier studies showed...”

The real answer is usually further in the sentence.

21. Move quickly

If an answer takes more than 1 minute, skip and return.

22. Practice with real Cambridge IELTS books

They match the real test style perfectly.

23. Build scanning reflexes

Your eyes should quickly jump to keywords without reading everything.



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