

## IELTS General Training

# Reading

# Reading Passage 1

Read the text below and answer Questions 1-14.



## Summer activities at London's Kew Gardens

- A** Climb up to the walkway among the trees, 18 metres above the ground, for a spectacular experience. Feel as tall as the trees and enjoy a bird's-eye view over the gardens.
- B** The Nash Conservatory displays stunning images from leading wildlife photographer Heather Angel. Each photograph explores the wealth of biodiversity at Kew Gardens, from foxes to birds, tiny insects to towering trees.
- C** A world of pollination comes to life in the Princess of Wales Conservatory. Find yourself in a tropical environment whilst walking through clouds of colourful butterflies as they fly around the Conservatory! Come face-to-face with gigantic sculptures of insects, birds and bats, which will help tell the fascinating stories of how they interact with plants.
- D** An extraordinary sound installation created by Chris Watson. On the hour throughout the day, the Palm House is filled with the sound of the dawn and dusk choruses of birds that live in the Central and South American rainforests.
- E** Come and see the fantastic outdoor exhibition of garden, wildlife and botanical photography. Walk amongst enlarged photographs and admire the wonderful garden photos – all taken by children aged 16 and under from all round the country. If you are in this age category and fancy yourself as a photographer, then you can enter for the next show!

**F** Young explorers can discover the new children's outdoor play area, shaped like a plant, in Kew's magical Conservation Area. As you journey through this interactive landscape, discover the functions of every part of a plant. Tunnel through giant roots, get lost among the leaves and hide amongst the large fungi, whilst solving puzzles along the way!

What is biodiversity all about? Did you know that every breath we take and every move we make depends on plants? Take a guided tour to discover what biodiversity means and why it matters so much.

**G** Visit our exciting and colourful exhibition of South American botanical paintings, which brings the continent's exotic and lush plants to life in works from two hundred years ago and from this century.

*Read the text below and answer Questions 7-14.*

## City Park and Ride

We have six purpose-built Park and Ride sites serving the city, more than almost anywhere else in the UK. Established for over 40 years, they provide around 5,000 parking spaces for cars. The sites are located on the main routes into the city centre. More than 3,000,000 passengers a year take a bus from a Park and Ride site into the city, reducing congestion and helping to improve the air quality in the city centre.

Parking at the sites is available only for those travelling from the site on a Park and Ride or other scheduled bus service, and is free. No overnight parking is permitted. Heavy goods vehicles are not permitted at the Park and Ride site at any time.

It's simple to use. Just park your car and buy your bus ticket from the bus driver, with the correct money if possible. An individual adult daily return purchased prior to 12:30 hrs for use that day costs £2.40. If purchased after 12:30 hrs it costs £2.10.

Up to four children under 16 travel free with an adult or concessionary pass holder. The return fare for unaccompanied children under 16 is £1.10.

Cycle and Ride for just £1.10 a day. Just park your cycle, motorcycle or scooter in the allocated space, and buy your ticket from the site office. You may be asked to provide evidence that you have travelled to the Park and Ride site by cycle, motorcycle or scooter.

Return tickets for concessionary bus pass holders cost £1 after 09:30 Monday to Friday and any time at weekend or bank holidays (when open). **Q14** At other times there is no reduction for holders of concessionary bus passes.

## Questions 1-6

The text has eight sections, **A-H**.

Which sections contain the following information?

Write the correct letter, **A-H**, in boxes **1-6** on your answer sheet.

- |   |                      |   |  |
|---|----------------------|---|--|
| 1 | <input type="text"/> | ▼ | learning what all the different sections of a plant do       |
| 2 | <input type="text"/> | ▼ | seeing art showing plants from a different part of the world |
| 3 | <input type="text"/> | ▼ | the possibility of having your work exhibited                |

- 4  learning about why human beings need plants
- 5  something that happens daily at the same times
- 6  learning about the relationship between various creatures,  
insects and plants

## Questions 7-14

Do the following statements agree with the information given in the text above?

<b>TRUE</b>	if the statement agrees with the information
<b>FALSE</b>	if the statement contradicts the information
<b>NOT GIVEN</b>	If there is no information on this

- 7  This was one of the first UK cities to introduce a Park and Ride scheme.
- 8  The amount of congestion in the city centre has fallen.
- 9  There is a special section of the car park for heavy goods vehicles.
- 10  Bus drivers do not give change so you must have the correct money for a ticket.
- 11  Ticket prices vary depending on the time of day.
- 12  Children under 16 travelling alone are allowed free travel.
- 13  The space for cycles, motorcycles and scooters is close to the site office.
- 14  People with concessionary bus passes must pay the full fare to travel at certain times.

# Reading Passage 2

Read the text below and answer Questions 15-20.



## HOW TO ORGANISE A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS CONFERENCE

### To start with

Advance planning is the key to a hassle-free conference. The key players of a successful conference are the delegates, so identify the audience and then tailor the programme you are planning to their particular needs.

### Where and when

The date and venue should then be chosen. These are often interdependent, and when choosing the date take into account the timing of similar regular events which may clash. Also consider holiday periods which may mean that people are away and so will not be able to attend.

When choosing a venue, check how easy it is to reach by train and plane etc. and the availability of parking for those driving. Visit the venue personally: consider the size of the main lecture hall and whether it is big enough for the anticipated number of delegates, then look into the potential of having breakout areas for separating into a number of groups for discussions. Then check whether there is a suitable lounge area for the tea/coffee breaks and an exhibition space for display stands if required.

### Who

The next stage is to choose the speakers and invite them, making sure you give them ample notice so they are more likely to be available. Ask only those people that you know speak well.

Do not try and speak yourself in addition to organising the conference, as this will be too demanding.

### **Contacting people**

Let people know the date and venue by an early mailshot. This allows them, if they are interested, to put the date into their diaries. At the same time, contact all the speakers again, confirming their particular topic, the audio-visual aids which will be available and finding out their accommodation requirements. Ask them to provide a written summary of their presentation for distribution to delegates at the conference.

### **Final arrangements**

Approximately 4-5 weeks before the conference, confirm the provisional numbers with the venue. Contact them again about two weeks prior to the conference to confirm final numbers, decide on menus and finalise the arrangements.

Prepare delegate packs to include a name badge, delegate list and programme. The venue should provide pads of paper and pens. Then prepare questionnaires for all delegates to complete at the end of the conference. Their responses will enable you to gauge the success of the conference and start planning the next one!

***Read the text below and answer Questions 21-27.***

## **How to deal with the annual performance appraisal**

The annual performance appraisal can help improve your productivity and provide a foundation for your work priorities. It is, however, critical to have the right attitude and approach. Knowing what areas your superiors see as your weaknesses is the most direct way of increasing the likelihood of being considered for promotion, if that is what you are looking for.

### **Preparation**

Send your boss a summary of your achievements. Reminding your boss of activities, special assignments you did, and projects you were in charge of helps him or her create a more accurate performance appraisal. Consider keeping notes of these on a regular basis to make it easier to provide the data when required.

Create a list of questions you would like to discuss during your appraisal. This one-on-one time with your boss is an excellent opportunity to ask him or her about your role in the company, request any additional responsibilities you would like and clarify your priorities. But it is best to focus your attention around personal and professional improvements, rather than financial considerations, such as an increase in salary.

### **During the appraisal**

Present a positive attitude as soon as you enter the appraisal room. This approach may lead to a more constructive discussion of review items. Avoid taking any negative assessments that are offered as a personal attack, but rather try to take them on board calmly, because if you put the failings right you will improve your performance. A realistic assessment of your strengths and weaknesses can be one of the most beneficial ways of helping you advance in the company.

### **After the appraisal**

Create a list of personal goals based on your performance appraisal. Make the items detailed and measurable if possible. Send this list to your boss so he or she knows you took the appraisal seriously. Use this list to help achieve higher scores on your next performance appraisal.

Six months after the appraisal, ask for a mid-term review with your boss to discuss your progress. This session should be more relaxed and informal than the official review. Ask for more feedback to help you improve. Checking in with your boss helps him or her remember your dedication as far as your job is concerned, and may help remove any criticisms before they become a review point on your next formal appraisal.

### **Questions 15-20**

*Complete the notes below.*

*Choose **ONE WORD ONLY** from the text for each answer.*

*Write your answers in boxes **15-20** on your answer sheet.*



## ORGANISING A BUSINESS CONFERENCE

### First steps:

decide who the conference is for  
ensure the programme fulfils delegates' requirements

### Venue and timing:

try to avoid scheduling the conference during 15 \_\_\_\_\_ times or when other annual conferences occur  
check accessibility by different modes of transport  
choose a place with a large hall and also 16 \_\_\_\_\_ spaces for smaller meetings

### Speakers:

choose appropriate speakers  
give the speakers as much 17 \_\_\_\_\_ as possible

### Communication:

send out a mailshot to potential delegates  
confirm individual details with speakers, check if they will need accommodation and request a 18 \_\_\_\_\_ of their presentation

### Final tasks:

give the venue precise numbers of attendees  
make sure each person attending receives information about the conference and a 19 \_\_\_\_\_ for identification  
use 20 \_\_\_\_\_ to get opinions on the conference

## Questions 21-27

Complete the sentences below.

Choose **ONE WORD ONLY** from the text for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes **21-27** on your answer sheet.

By learning at an appraisal what areas of work need improving, staff can improve their chances of getting 21 \_\_\_\_\_

It is important to think of some 22 \_\_\_\_\_ that can be used during the appraisal.

The appraisal can be a good time to ask the boss for extra 23 \_\_\_\_\_

React 24 \_\_\_\_\_ to any criticism.

It is helpful to identify a number of individual 25 \_\_\_\_\_ arising from the appraisal comments.

Staff can request a meeting half-way through the year to look at the 26 \_\_\_\_\_ which has been achieved.

If staff act on any appraisal comments, they will demonstrate their 27 \_\_\_\_\_ to their work.

## Reading Passage 3

Read the text below and answer Questions 28-40



### Efforts to save a special bird — the spoon-billed sandpiper

*Last year an international team of ornithologists devised a bold plan to rescue one of the world's rarest birds. Gerrit Vyn reports*

**A** At first glance the spoon-billed sandpiper resembles other small migratory birds of the sandpiper family that breed across the Arctic. But it is the only one to have developed a flattened bill that flares out into a 'spoon' at the end, and that makes it special. If it becomes extinct, thousands of years of evolution will come to an end, which would be a real tragedy.

The bird's Russian name, kulik-lopaten, means 'shovel beak', which is an apt description of a remarkable structure. The bill is 19 mm long and 10 mm wide near the tip and the edges are lined with sharp serrations, called papillae. Theories have varied as to how the bill functions; one suggestion is that the sandpiper sweeps it through the water in a similar fashion to its larger namesake, the spoonbill. But Nigel Clark, a leading authority on the sandpiper, says the comparison is misleading.

**B** Until a few years ago, the spoon-billed sandpiper had never been fully documented, which added to its fascination. But an air of mystery is not helpful if you're a Critically Endangered species. So the organisation 'Birds Russia' decided to produce a photographic and audio record of this imperilled bird with the help of experts round the world. In May of last year, I joined the international expedition to one of the species' last breeding strongholds in North-East Russia. The primary aim of the two-and-a-half month expedition, however, was to collect eggs from wild sandpipers; those eggs would then be hatched in captivity nearby. Later, the chicks would

be flown to the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT) headquarters at Slimbridge in the UK, in order to establish a small, self-sustaining population there. These birds would provide a 'safety net', an insurance policy against the wild birds dying out.

**C** You might wonder why birds like the spoon-billed sandpiper travel such great distances, about 8,000 km in total, from their wintering grounds on the tropical coasts of Bangladesh, Burma and Vietnam in South-East Asia to breed on the low land, commonly called tundra, in North-East Russia, but from the birds' point of view it is worth it. Though they often arrive to find hostile, wintry weather while they are finding their mates and making their nests, there are relatively few predators there, and the abundance of insects that emerge during the brief but intense Arctic summer creates ideal conditions for raising their chicks.

**D** Two main factors are responsible for the sandpiper's recent rapid decline: the ongoing destruction of stopover habitat on its migration route and hunting on its wintering grounds. The development of new industrial cities is destroying former tidal areas, where sandpipers and other migratory birds used to rest and refuel. Subsistence hunting is certainly a hazard in some Asian countries, where hunters trap birds for food. Conservationists are targeting this problem with small-scale interventions. For example, hunters from 40 villages have been given alternative sources of income, such as cool boxes in which they can take fish to sell at markets, in return for a halt to the bird-netting.

**E** Once the expedition team had reached its destination, it was seven days before we spotted the first sandpiper. In the following days, more began to arrive and the males' song was heard, advertising their patches of territory to potential mates.

As the sandpipers paired up, the song gave way to the quiet of egg-laying and incubation. In total nine nests were found. The first one was lost to a predator, along with the female attending it. This was a stark reminder of the vulnerability of a tiny population to natural events, such as storms or predation.

The team then selected donor nests and transferred the eggs to specially prepared incubators. They collected 20 eggs in all, taking entire clutches each time – it was early in the breeding season, so the females were likely to lay replacements. Then 50 days after our arrival, the moment arrived: I witnessed my first wild spoon-billed sandpipers hatch. I had been lying inside a wind-battered hide for 36 hours when I saw the first tiny chicks emerge from the eggs. Having hidden a microphone near the nest, I could also just hear their first calls. Later, I watched them stumbling through the 15 cm-high jungle of grasses on comically oversized legs and feet. But my joy was tempered by concern. Difficulties on their migration route and in their wintering areas meant that other tiny creatures like these faced immense dangers.

**F** The complex rescue plan does give some grounds for hope. Young chicks were flown to WWT Slimbridge last year and again this summer. A high-tech biosecure unit has been built for them there, it is divided in two, with the older birds in one section and this year's chicks in the other. To minimise the risk of infections, staff change into full-body overalls and rubber

shoes and wash their hands before entering. Hygiene is crucial: even a single strand of human hair could harm the chicks by becoming twisted round their legs or bills. The rescue plan's final stage, once the captive flock has built up sufficiently, will be to fly eggs back to Russia, to release the chicks there. It's a gamble, but when the survival of a species this special is at stake, you have to try.

## Questions 28-33

The text below has six sections, **A-F**.

Choose the correct heading for each section from the list of headings below.

Write the correct number, **i-viii**, in boxes **28-33** on your answer sheet.

List of Headings	
<b>i</b>	Gaining public recognition
<b>ii</b>	Reasons for continuing to make the long journey
<b>iii</b>	A disappointment followed by desirable outcomes
<b>iv</b>	The main stages of the plan
<b>v</b>	A growth in the number of natural predators
<b>vi</b>	increasing threats
<b>vii</b>	A very unusual feature of these birds
<b>viii</b>	Cautious optimism

28   Section A

29   Section B

30   Section C

31   Section D

32   Section E

33   Section F

## Questions 34-37

Choose the correct letter, **A, B, C** or **D**.

Write the correct letter in boxes **34-37** on your answer sheet.

- 34 What was the main purpose of the international expedition?
- A  to add sandpiper eggs to an international frozen egg bank
  - B  to maintain a small group of sandpipers for future generations
  - C  to make an audiovisual record of the Russian sandpiper colony
  - D  to protect a colony of wild sandpipers through a breeding season
- 35 What do we learn about the drop in the sandpiper population?
- A  The birds are increasingly being hunted on their way north to Russia.
  - B  Scientists are managing to reduce deaths from netting considerably.
  - C  Efforts are being made to protect some of their coastal habitat sites.
  - D  Economic growth is one of the underlying causes of the decline.
- 36 Which feeling did the writer express when the sandpiper chicks hatched?
- A  relief that his long wait was over
  - B  surprise at the sound of their song
  - C  worry about birds of the same species
  - D  amazement that they could walk so soon
- 37 The writer describes the sandpipers' unit at WWT Slimbridge to emphasise
- A  how much care is being devoted to their welfare.
  - B  how much money is being spent on the project.
  - C  his surprise at how fragile the young birds are.
  - D  his confidence in the technology available.

## Questions 38-40

Complete the summary below.

Choose **ONE WORD ONLY** from the text for each answer.

### *The life cycle of the spoon-billed sandpiper*

*In early spring, spoon-billed sandpipers return to their breeding grounds in Russia in the area known as 38 \_\_\_\_\_. Although the weather there is often very harsh to begin with, there are obvious advantages to the sandpipers. There is above all a plentiful supply of 39 \_\_\_\_\_, and this makes it possible for the sandpiper chicks to develop well. The lack of 40 \_\_\_\_\_ is another definite advantage. As a result, a good proportion of the chicks grow up to face the long flight to the South-East Asian coasts.*