

## IELTSFever General Reading Practice test 4

### SECTION 1 Questions 1 - 14

Read the text below and answer Questions 1 - 7

#### A Penny That Saved A Life

Of the three Trickett brothers who left their home in Lincolnshire to fight for the United Kingdom in the First World War, only John would survive. Horace and Billy were among the more than eight million soldiers killed in the Great War, which saw casualties on an unprecedented scale due to the advent of new, more advanced weapons. John, however, was saved by the most ordinary and rudimentary equipment on the entire battlefield: a penny in his breast pocket that deflected a bullet intended for his heart.

The penny, issued in 1889 (10 years before John was born) and severely bent from the bullet's impact, was sold on March 22, 2019, in Hansons Auctioneers' Medals and Militaria Auction. Initially, the highest bid was £1,700, vastly exceeding Hansons' initial estimate of between £100 and £200. Ultimately, it sold for £4500. The lot included a British victory medal as well as Trickett's 1918 discharge certificate, among other items.

Six phone bidders as well as internet bidders battled to own the collection but it was sold to a buyer in the room - Mr. Nigel Trickett, 55, of Owston Ferry, near Doncaster. Mr. Trickett, owner of a carpet business, said: "Private Trickett was my grand-dad and we wanted to keep the medals and penny in the family. It will be handed down. It's where it belongs and we'll take a lot of pride in showing it to family members.

"When the story went viral it brought 50 members of the family together - we all got in touch with each other. My grand-dad's story is very interesting and true. Everything wouldn't have happened in our family the way it has without that penny.

While we don't know precisely when and where Private Trickett had his brush with death, Adrian Stevenson, Hansons' military expert, says that the incident occurred in 1917, on the war's Western Front. The bullet, fired by a German soldier, ricocheted off Trickett's penny and traveled up through Trickett's nose, exiting through his left ear. Trickett lost hearing in that ear for the rest of his life, his granddaughter Maureen Coulson told Hansons. Trickett received an honorable discharge from the military in September 1918. After coming home, he got married, had eight children, and worked as a postmaster and switchboard operator.

Coulson answered Hanson's advertisement for a routine valuation event, bringing the penny and Trickett's other effects to Stevenson. Ironically, the coin was "one of those real impossible things to value," says Stevenson, who eventually settled on a relatively low

estimate for the item due to the "very modest" value of the metal itself. It's not the first time in Stevenson's career that he's heard of an everyday item blocking a bullet and making the difference between life and death. Bibles, shaving mirrors, and cigarette cases, he says, have all done the same and during the war, some manufacturers even began advertising thicker mirrors, explicitly pitching their life-saving potential.

"It's strange to think," said Coulson, "that, but for that penny, (Trickett's] children would not have been born and I wouldn't be here." There could be many more families throughout the world who could say the same about other objects: Since Coulson delivered the coin to Hansons, the auction house has also acquired a shrapnel-damaged flask and belt buckle that may have saved their carriers.

"I was born after my grand-dad died but I remember seeing the penny when I was seven. We plan to visit my grand-dad's grave in Bolton upon Dearne, Yorkshire, on the way home." The medal was sold by Private Trickett's grand-daughter Mrs. Maureen Coulson, 63, from Duffield, Derbyshire, who plans to give some of the proceeds to charity.

## Questions 1-7

**Do the following statements agree with the information given in the text? In boxes on your answer sheet, write**

<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

**Question 1.** The penny was a piece of equipment issued to all soldiers.

**Question 2.** The penny that saved Trickett's life was bought by his grand-son.

**Question 3.** John Trickett served in the British Army till 1918.

**Question 4.** The auction house set a low initial price for the penny because it was made of a metal which was not very expensive.

**Question 5.** But for the penny, there would have been no Mr. Coulson.

**Question 6.** Thicker shaving mirrors helped to save lives during the war.

**Question 7.** The auction house had acquired a shrapnel damaged flask that helped save the life of its owner.

Read the text below and answer Questions 8 - 14

## Seven Wonders of the World

**A. Great Wall of China:** The Great Wall of China is a stone-and-earth fortification created to protect the borders of the Chinese Empire from invading Mongols. The Great Wall is actually a succession of multiple walls spanning approximately 4,000 miles, making it the world's longest manmade structure.

**B. Christ the Redeemer Statue (Rio de Janeiro):** This statue has been looming over the citizens of Rio de Janeiro from upon Corcovado Mountain in an awe-inspiring state of eternal blessing since 1931. The 130-foot reinforced concrete-and-soapstone statue was designed by Heitor da Silva Costa and cost approximately \$250,000 to build.

**C. Machu Picchu (Peru):** Machu Picchu, an Incan city of sparkling granite is thought by scholars to have been a sacred archaeological center for the nearby Incan capital of Cusco. Built at the peak of the Incan Empire in the mid-1400s, this mountain citadel was later abandoned by the Incas. The site remained unknown except to locals until 1911, when it was rediscovered by archaeologist Hiram Bingham.

**D. Chichen Itza (Yucatan Peninsula, Mexico):** The genius and adaptability of Mayan culture can be seen in the splendid ruins of Chichen Itza. This powerful city, a trading center for cloth, slaves, honey and salt, flourished from approximately AD 800 to 1200, and acted as the political and economic hub of the Mayan civilization.

**E. The Roman Colosseum (Rome):** Rome's, if not Italy's, most enduring icon is undoubtedly its Colosseum. Built between A.D. 70 and 80 A.D., the elliptical structure sat nearly 50,000 spectators, who gathered to watch the gladiatorial events as well as other public spectacles, including battle re-enactments, animal hunts and executions. Earthquakes and stone-robbers have left the Colosseum in a state of ruin.

**F. Taj Mahal (Agra, India):** A mausoleum commissioned for the wife of Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan, the Taj Mahal was built between 1632 and 1648. Considered the most perfect specimen of Muslim art in India, the white marble structure actually represents a number of architectural styles, including Persian, Islamic, Turkish and Indian. The Taj Mahal also encompasses formal gardens of raised pathways, sunken flower beds and a linear reflecting pool.

**G. Petra (Jordan):** Petra was the capital of the Nabataean empire of King Aretas IV, and likely existed in its prime from 9 B.C. to A.D. 40. The members of this civilization proved to be early experts in manipulating water technology, constructing intricate tunnels and water chambers. A number of incredible structures carved into stone, a 4,000-seat amphitheater and the El-Deir monastery have also helped the site earn its fame.

## Questions 8-14

Look at the descriptions of the Seven Wonders of the World. For which wonders are the following statements true? Write **A - G** against each statement.

**Question 8.** It has for long been a symbol of not only the city, but also the country where it is located.

**Question 9.** For a few hundred years, this city was a great commercial hub.

**Question 10.** This defensive structure protected a country's borders.

**Question 11.** This structure encompasses several different styles of construction.

**Question 12.** This wonder arouses a sense of reverence and seems to be showering its blessings upon the city.

**Question 13.** This fortress had been deserted by its inhabitants.

**Question 14.** The capital of an ancient empire, this site has a number of unbelievable structures.

## SECTION 2

Read the text below and answer Questions 15 - 27

### Questions 15-20

## Group Discussions

When a particular idea or topic is debated upon by a group of people, it is called a Group Discussion (GD). GDs serve as one of the yardsticks to select candidates in management schools or for certain jobs. Here are some rules and tips to help you improve your GD skills.

**A.** Speaking is a must in a group discussion, but when and how is vital. It is preferable if you are the first speaker: it proves your ability to initiate matters. Now, if you have initiated the GD, you have to be very knowledgeable and be able to respond to counter arguments. Also the middle part and conclusion are also important. Remain involved in the GD throughout.

**B.** Not only speaking but your listening behaviour is also tested in a group discussion. You have to prove your point with facts but at the same time you cannot force your opinion on others. Be smart and witty, and listen to what others are saying to be able to counter their specific points.

- C.** Involvement throughout the group discussion is a must. As mentioned earlier, you must remain engaged in the GD throughout the time it is going on. As for body language, keep it sober rather than aggressive. Pointing fingers is a strict no-no. Even when you are rebutting a point, keep your demeanor pleasant.
- D.** If you are speaking amongst a bunch of smart, outgoing and well-spoken management aspirants you better not fumble at any point. In this case working on your communication entails the practice of conveying ideas within a specific time frame, expressing your ideas with a perfectly agreeable body language and using the right words in their correct context.
- E.** Make sure you clarify your doubts regarding the topic, if any, with the moderator as soon as the topic is given to you and not later when your turn to speak comes. Topics may range from general issues like dowry, child labour, gender inequality, and price rise to current affairs like Kashmir, Coalgate, and Scams etc. If you are asked to highlight a specific facet of the topic, try to concentrate on that instead of discussing all the facets of the same.
- F.** Yes, always take a stand on the topic given to you. There might be a topic like "Indian Athletes Are a No-Show at the Olympics." Convey clearly whether you agree with the topic or not and make sure that you have equally strong stats to back your claim. Don't be ambivalent. Be careful not to sound too assertive in the process. Instead, put across your point with clear arguments which will automatically reflect your point of view.
- G.** It might seem a little difficult to sum up all your points of argument in a well-drawn conclusion in just about 1-2 minutes. But that's the trick! Do try to master this, as it helps the speaker after you to carry on from what you said and also makes you stand out.
- H.** Be aware of what's happening around you. You should be well informed, both on current hot topics and also general topics of perennial interest. Your knowledge might be sourced from news headlines, newspapers, internet, books, informative TV channels etc. Avoid sources which are too promotional and give you only one side of a particular issue.
- I.** Carry a notebook. To start with you may make some notes of the points that you wish to cover. During the GD, write down the points already discussed made by those who oppose you, so that you may rebut them later. Try to come up with unique but sensible points to boost your argument.

## Questions 15-17

Match the statements below to the paragraph where they are mentioned:

**Question 15.** You have to put across your point succinctly with utmost clarity.

**Question 16.** You cannot have mixed feelings about the topic.

**Question 17.** Remain calm and pleasant even when you are expressing disagreement.

**Questions 18 - 21** Do the following statements agree with the information given in the text? In boxes on your answer sheet, 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

**Question 18.** If you do not know the topic very well, do not initiate the discussion.

**Question 19.** GDs are serious discussions aimed at making a selection of persons; displaying a sense of humour in GDs is not a good idea.

**Question 20.** Unless you listen to the arguments of others you will not be able to rebut their arguments.

**Question 21.** You are not allowed to seek clarifications on the topic once the GD has begun.

Read the text below and answer Questions 22 - 27

## Four Ways to Manage a Difficult Boss

You've heard it time and time again. People don't leave a company – they leave their immediate superior in the hierarchy. According to one Gallup study 50% of employees left their job "to get away from their manager to improve their overall life at some point in their career". Fifty percent! But what if you aren't ready to leave your job just yet? There are ways to manage a difficult boss; just tread carefully.

As a career coach, I advise my clients to keep their emotions in check when dealing with their manager. Normally I'm an advocate for speaking up, but in this situation, please proceed with caution. You don't want to burn any bridges. Not only do you need to deal with this person on a near daily basis, you may need the reference down the road.

If you aren't ready to leave your current job just yet, there are ways to make your work life more tolerable. Whatever your reason for sticking around (for now), here are four ways to manage a difficult boss.

**1. Practice mindfulness.** Incorporating mindfulness at work can be a game changer. It drastically lowers stress levels, which is critical when dealing with a difficult boss. Practice focusing on the present moment. This means not dwelling on what your boss said to you yesterday, or worrying about what she might say tomorrow. Another mindfulness tip is to focus on your breathing. The next time your boss says something that is about to throw you into a tailspin, sit and practice deep breathing. Inhale through your nose, hold briefly, and exhale out your mouth. Repeat until you feel calmer. Simple exercises like these will help you keep your cool and allow you to look at things with a clearer head.

**2. Empathy and Sympathy.** While this step may feel difficult, try to be the bigger person and reflect on what your boss might be going through. Is she dealing with a difficult manager or under extreme stress, or not being shown compassion for a difficult situation at home? Perhaps there's something going on in her personal life that is affecting how she handles things at work. Practicing empathy can help you understand her perspective and perhaps even realize that her behaviour towards you isn't personal.

**3. Take responsibility.** Is your boss bringing everyone else on the team down, or is she mainly focused on you? If you notice that you're the only person that has a negative relationship with your boss, resulting in inimical interactions all the time, take a step back and ask yourself how it got that way. Did something unfavourable happen that you can take responsibility for? If that's the case, step up and rectify the situation right away. If it isn't the case, go ahead and vent...just don't do it inside of the office.

**4. Vent outside of the office.** It's healthy, normal, and totally necessary to process your emotions, especially when you're under constant stress. Otherwise, you may find yourself with pent-up anger, ready to blow at any moment. Release all the anxiousness caused by the feelings by talking it out with a friend or family member, and then let those feelings go. This will make you more pleasant to be around, and you'll have a greater capacity to handle whatever your boss throws your way. Whatever you do, don't unleash the drama on your colleagues; that's how rumours start.

Dealing with a difficult boss is no joke. If you've practiced these techniques and still find your boss to be intolerable, brush up your resume and consider leaving ASAP. Staying in a toxic work environment, exercising restraint all the time isn't worth it. The last thing you want to do is compromise your sanity or your health.

The next time you find yourself in a tough situation with your manager, remember that while you can't control your boss, you can control how you react.

**Questions 22-27**

**Choose any of the words from the text given in the box below to fill in the blanks.**

**Question 22.** There are several ways in which you can ..... a difficult boss.

**Question 23.** When you are interacting with your manager, you have to keep your ..... under control.

**Question 24.** At times, if you think through the situation with .... .., you may come to the conclusion that your boss does not have anything personal against you.

**Question 25.** If you have a difficult boss, try to figure out if you are the centre of his attention and are you the sole individual with whom he has..... Vibes.

**Question 26.** When you have a difficult boss, it is quite natural to get emotional with all the ..... of the workplace.

**Question 27.** There will be times when you will be in a difficult situation vis-a-vis your immediate supervisor; while you cannot forecast what he or she will do or say, you must ensure that you maintain ..... over your reactions.

sentiments	sympathy	restraint	pressures
intensities	compassion	industry	contrary
dominate	anger	control	jaundiced
handle	insight	adverse	oversight

## SECTION 3

**Read the text below. And answer Questions 28 - 40.**

*You should spend about 20 minutes on Questions 27-40, which are based on reading passage III below.*

### **Video Games' Unexpected Benefits to Human Brain**

A. James Paul Gee, professor of education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, played his first video game years ago when his six-year-old son Sam was playing Pajama Sam: No Need to Hide When It's Dark Outside. He wanted to play the game so he could support Sam's problem solving. Though Pajama Sam is not an "educational game", it is replete with the types of problems psychologists study when they study thinking and learning. When he saw how well the game held Sam's attention, he wondered what sort of beast a more mature video game might be.

B. Video and computer games, like many other popular, entertaining and addicting kid's activities, are looked down upon by many parents as time-wasters, and worse, parents think that these games rot the brain. Violent video games are readily blamed by the media and some experts as the reason why some youth become violent or commit extreme antisocial behavior. Recent content analyses of video games show that as many as 89% of games contain some violent content, but there is no form of aggressive content for 70% of popular games. Many scientists and psychologists, like James Paul Gee, find that video games actually have many benefits – the main one being making kids smart. Video games may actually teach kids high-level thinking skills that they will need in the future.

C. "Video games change your brain," according to University of Wisconsin psychologist Shawn Green. Video games change the brain's physical structure the same way as do learning to read, playing the piano, or navigating using a map. Much like exercise can build muscle, the powerful combination of concentration and rewarding surges of neurotransmitters like dopamine, which strengthens neural circuits, can build the player's brain.

D. Video games give your child's brain a real workout. In many video games, the skills required to win involve abstract and high level thinking. These skills are not even taught at school. Some of the mental skills trained by video games include: following instructions, problem solving, logic, hand-eye coordination, fine motor and spatial skills. Research also suggests that people can learn iconic, spatial, and visual attention skills from video games. There have been even studies with adults showing that experience with video games is related to better surgical skills. Jacob Benjamin, doctor from Beth

Israel Medical Center NY, found a direct link between skill at video gaming and skill at keyhole or laparoscopic surgery. Also, a reason given by experts as to why fighter pilots of today are more skillful is that this generation's pilots are being weaned on video games.

E. The players learn to manage resources that are limited, and decide the best use of resources, the same way as in real life. In strategy games, for instance, while developing a city, an unexpected surprise like an enemy might emerge. This forces the player to be flexible and quickly change tactics. Sometimes the player does this almost every second of the game giving the brain a real workout. According to researchers at the University of Rochester, led by Daphne Bavelier, a cognitive scientist, games simulating stressful events such as those found in battle or action games could be a training tool for real-world situations. The study suggests that playing action video games primes the brain to make quick decisions. Video games can be used to train soldiers and surgeons, according to the study. Steven Johnson, author of *Everything Bad is Good For You: How Today's Popular Culture*, says gamers must deal with immediate problems while keeping their long-term goals on their horizon. Young gamers force themselves to read to get instructions, follow storylines of games, and get information from the game texts.

F. James Paul Gee, professor of education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, says that playing a video game is similar to working through a science problem. Like students in a laboratory, gamers must come up with a hypothesis. For example, players in some games constantly try out combinations of weapons and powers to use to defeat an enemy. If one does not work, they change hypotheses and try the next one. Video games are goal-driven experiences, says Gee, which are fundamental to learning. Also, using math skills is important to win in many games that involve quantitative analysis like managing resources. In higher levels of a game, players usually fail the first time around, but they keep on trying until they succeed and move on to the next level.

G. Many games are played online and involve cooperation with other online players in order to win. Video and computer games also help children gain self-confidence and many games are based on history, city building, governance and so on. Such games indirectly teach children about aspects of life on earth.

H In an upcoming study in the journal *Current Biology*, authors Daphne Bavelier, Alexandre Pouget, and C. Shawn Green report that video games could provide a potent training regimen for speeding up reactions in many types of real-life situations. The researchers tested dozens of 18- to 25-year-olds who were not ordinarily video game players. They split the subjects into two groups. One group played 50 hours of the fast-paced action video games "Call of Duty 2" and "Unreal Tournament," and the other group played 50 hours of the slow-moving strategy game "The Sims 2." After this

training period, all of the subjects were asked to make quick decisions in several tasks designed by the researchers. The action game players were up to 25 percent faster at coming to a conclusion and answered just as many questions correctly as their strategy game playing peers.

## Questions 28-31

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

Write your answers in boxes **28-31** on your answer sheet.

**Question 28. What is the main purpose of paragraph ONE?**

- {A} Introduction of professor James Paul Gee.
- {B} Introduction of the video game: Pajamas Sam.
- {C} Introduction of types of video games.
- {D} Introduction of the background of this passage.

**Question 29. What does the author want to express in the second paragraph?**

- {A} Video games are widely considered harmful for children's brains.
- {B} Most violent video games are the direct reason for juvenile delinquency.
- {C} Even though there is a certain proportion of violence in most video games; scientists and psychologists see its benefits of children's intellectual abilities.
- {D} Many parents regard video games as time-wasters, which rot children's brain.

**Question 30. What is correctly mentioned in paragraph four?**

- {A} Some schools use video games to teach students abstract and high-level thinking.
- {B} Video games improve the brain ability in various aspects.
- {C} Some surgeons have better skills because they play more video games.
- {D} Skillful fighter pilots in this generation love to play video games.

**Question 31. What is the expectation of the experiment the three researchers did?**

- {A} Gamers have to make the best use of the limited resource.
- {B} Gamers with better math skills will win in the end.
- {C} Strategy game players have a better ability to make quick decisions.
- {D} Video games help increase the speed of players' reaction effectively.

### Questions 32-35

Do the following statements agree with the information given in Reading Passage 3? In boxes 32-35 on your answer sheet, write

<b>TRUE</b>	<i>if the statement is true</i>
<b>FALSE</b>	<i>if the statement is false</i>
<b>NOT GIVEN</b>	<i>if the information is not given in the passage</i>

**Question 32.** Most video games are popular because of their violent content.

**Question 33.** The action game players minimized the percentage of making mistakes in the experiment.

**Question 34.** It would be a good idea for schools to apply video games in their classrooms.

**Question 35.** Those people who are addicted to video games have lots of dopamine in their brains.

**Questions 36-40**

*Use the information in the passage to match the people (listed A-F) with opinions or deeds below. Write the appropriate letters A-F in boxes 36-40 on your answer sheet.*

**A** The writer's opinion

**B** James Paul Gee

**C** Shawn Green

**D** Daphne Bavelier

**E** Steven Johnson

**F** Jacob Benjamin

**Question 36.** Video games as other daily life skills alter the brain's physical structure.

**Question 37.** Brain is ready to make decisions without hesitation when players are immersed in playing stressful games.

**Question 38.** The purpose-motivated experience that video games offer plays an essential role in studying.

**Question 39.** Players are good at tackling prompt issues with future intentions.

**Question 40.** It helps children broaden their horizon in many aspects and gain self-confidence.