

IELTSFever General Reading Practice

Test 6

SECTION 1 Questions 1 - 14

Read the text below and answer Questions 1 - 7

Plays Running at West End

The West End of London refers to a distinct region of Central London, in which many of the city's theatres are located. A snapshot of plays running in the West End theaters:

{A}. The Price: David Suchet delivers a comic tour de force as a silver-tongued 90 year old furniture dealer in Arthur Miller's masterpiece, 'The Price'. Two brothers, Victor and Walter Franz, one a New York cop and the other a successful surgeon, meet for the first time in sixteen years to sell their family furniture. Revelation follows stunning revelation as each brother realises the price they have paid for heart breaking decisions made decades earlier.

{B}. The Night of the Iguana: Globe-winner Clive Owen returns to the West End for the first time in 18 years to play Rev. T. Lawrence Shannon in 'The Night of the Iguana', a new production directed by James Macdonald. Set in the strange limbo of 1940, in a hot and humid Mexico, a group of travellers meet at the run-down Costa Verde Hotel, which brings them together in an epic battle between flesh and spirit, captivity and freedom, art and faith, heightened by a tropical rain-storm.

{C}. Admissions: Alex Kingston stars in this award-winning and biting funny new comedy. Sherri is the Head of Admissions at a private school, fighting to diversify the student intake and she wants you to know about it. When her son is deferred from his university of choice, and his best friend - who 'ticks more boxes' - makes it, Sherri's personal ambition collides with her progressive values. Piercing and provocative, 'Admissions' dares to question whether the race to the top is ever simply black and white.

{D}. The Mousetrap: Agatha Christie's legendary whodunit, The Mousetrap, is still thriving after over 60 years in the West End. The world's longest-running play, this masterpiece goes from strength to strength as a new generation of theatregoers are tricked and teased at St. Martin's Theatre. Experience this cracking yarn today - an irresistible treat for amateur sleuths everywhere!

{E}. Cyprus Avenue: David Ireland's black comedy Cyprus Avenue returns to West End for a limited four-week run. Eric Miller is a Belfast Loyalist. He believes his five-week old granddaughter is Gerry Adams. His family keep telling him to stop living in the past and fighting old battles that 'nobody cares about anymore but his cultural heritage is under siege. He must act. This is the story of one man struggling with the past and terrified of the future.

{F}. The Toast: Following a phenomenal sell-out run at the Traverse part of the Edinburgh Fringe Festival Toast now makes its West End debut. Nigel Slater's Toast is a new play based on his award-winning autobiography. Vividly recreating suburban England in the 1960s Nigel Slater's childhood is told through the tastes and smells he grew up with. From making the perfect sherry trifle, waging war over cakes through to the playground politics of sweets and the rigid rules of restaurant dining, this is a moving and evocative tale of love, loss and...toast.

{G}. Strange Fruits: Alvin and Errol are young, black and living in England in the 1980s, with an entire country and political system set against them. They focus firmly on their past - the sunny Caribbean and heroic father they left behind when their mother brought them to England twenty years ago. But when Alvin returns home from his grandfather's funeral a new version of their past emerges and the two brothers are caught in a desperate struggle to unearth the truth about their existence.

Questions 1-7

Identify the play from the following hints:

- (1). This play will be staged in the West End for the first time.
- (2). The place where the actors meet is not very well maintained
- (3). This play is a mystery story.
- (4). One of the actors speaks very persuasively.
- (5). New facts come to light after a death in the family.
- (6). It is a story where one's personal values come into conflict with what the actor wants in real life.
- (7). This play looks at the funny side of things usually considered very serious.

Read the text below and answer Questions 8 - 14

Foods You Should Never Buy at the Airport

Soft pretzels

A big old soft pretzel is not a meal. Those fluffy carbs might smell enticing, but carbo-loading before a long flight will leave your tummy rumbling again by take-off. Look for something with protein and fibre that will keep you satisfied until you land, or better yet, pack a meal from home. Making a sandwich at home to save money or packing leftovers like pasta salad or grilled chicken in an old, washed plastic container, such as a cottage cheese tub, is recommended.

Guilty pleasures

Try not to lump your waiting time at the airport with the "treat mentality of the rest of your vacation. Even though it might be the kick-off to a vacation, you want to save those calories for something unique when you arrive. Skip the specialty coffee drink and stick with plain coffee if you need a caffeine fix, or leave room for ice cream at the beach instead of gobbling a bag of cookies at the airport.

Yogurt based Dessert

You've seen yogurt touted time and time again as one of the healthiest snacks you can get, thanks to its satiating protein. But that fruit and yogurt dessert isn't the healthy and fresh choice that it seems. Yogurt has a halo over it as a healthy food, and obviously it is, but in context of what additives are in it. By the time you turn plain yogurt into a sugary flavoured yogurt topped with granola and fruit (which, unlike fresh berries, is full of added sugar), it isn't a healthy choice anymore.

Granola bars

Granola bars are often designed to look like a smart choice, but there's more than meets the eye. Granola bars can be packed with added sugar, high-fructose corn syrup, and other decidedly unhealthy ingredients, especially if they're covered in a waxy coating. That said, a shelf-stable, portable snack is convenient when you need to take the hunger off during your travels, so hunt down an option with 12 or fewer grams of sugar.

Glass of Wine

While a glass of wine as you wait for your flight won't do much harm for most people, you'll want to keep your drinking to a minimum. Not only could it dehydrate you before an already dehydrating plane ride, but alcohol isn't good for deep sleep. You might crash quickly, but the alcohol will wake you up and keep you out of deep REM sleep as your liver works it out.

Water bottles

Because hydration is important, especially when you're stuck in a dry plane cabin, we recommend sipping extra water the night and morning before your flight so you aren't dehydrated when you board. Especially if your flight is longer than a couple of hours; however, though, don't ignore your thirst in the name of avoiding the bathroom.

Anything your stomach isn't used to

When you're about to sit in close quarters for hours on end, you'll want to avoid foods that don't tend to sit well with your digestive system. Steer clear of foods that normally might upset your stomach, such as certain types of fibre or greasy foods. A hamburger and French fries or fried chicken before you get on a plane might not be the best idea.

Questions 8 - 14

Do the following statements agree with the information given in the text? Write:

TRUE	if the statement is True
FALSE	if the statement is false
NOT GIVEN	If the information is not given in the passage

(8). Rather than buying a soft pretzel, buy something with protein and fibre, it is even better than your homemade sandwich.

(9). When you arrive at the airport, you can have an ice cream to kick off your vacation.

(10). Yogurt without additives is a healthy food.

(11). If granola bars have a waxy coating they are likely to have add-ons that are not healthy.

(12). Alcohol will help you to go to sleep quickly.

(13). Do not avoid drinking water if you are thirsty just because it may make you go to the bathroom.

(14). You can eat whatever you want as long as your stomach is used to it.

SECTION 2

Read the text below and answer Questions 15 - 27

Questions 15 - 21

The Greatest Risks in Climbing Mount Everest

What are the Difficulties in Climbing Mount Everest?

Altitude Sickness: This is the biggest risk to Mt. Everest climbers. It will affect many aspects of their health. The higher they get, the less oxygen there is in the air. Their body can slowly adapt to this but only up to a point. Even with the comparatively lengthy period required to climb this

high, they are unlikely to ever feel quite themselves above base camp, and in the Death Zone above 8,000m they are beyond the limit of their ability to adapt to the altitude.

Temperature: Air temperature drops by roughly 0.65 degrees Centigrade per 100 meters of height gained. That means at 8,800m they can expect the temperature to be about 57 degrees Centigrade less than at sea level. That's a gross simplification ignoring many other factors but you get the idea: it is cold up there. It does not help that climbers switch from lying still in the darkness at night to slogging up-hill with the heat of the sun bearing down from above and reflecting up from the snow.

Weather: The window of opportunity for summiting will be dictated by a good weather forecast but many are the climbers who have been caught out by storms, holding out a little too long on summit day. They can't control the weather gods but they can get a good forecast, listen to their instincts and not ignore the early warning signs.

Falls: One of the highest direct causes of death on Everest is falls. These can happen both when actually climbing, particularly on the high ridges, and also in careless moments at the higher camps. Stepping out of the tent for a wee at night onto ground covered in ice being a particular example. Maintaining vigilance with their footwork, double checking knots and karabiners, and a good amount of prior experience on snow and ice are prudent steps for reducing this risk.

Avalanche: Twice as likely as falls to get them on the slopes of Qomolangma (Tibetan name for Everest) are avalanches. There tend to be specific areas in which the likelihood of their occurrence is higher. In addition to falling snow, falling ice and rocks are yet other hazards they can face.

Crevasses: These are great cracks that appear in glacial ice which threaten to swallow careless or unfortunate climbers. To aid safe travel across glaciers, teams tie ropes between each of their members so they can drag out anyone unlucky enough to take a fall.

Summit Fever: Easily said but near impossible to avoid entirely, the temptation to push on for "just another ten minutes" is strong in all of us. But combine it with the intoxication of so much effort and the mind-altering effects of altitude on the danger-ridden slopes of Mount Everest and you have a recipe for disaster.

The practical advice is to have a set "turn-around time" at which point you head back down regardless of where you are. Something else worth doing is taking the time to go through your motivation for being on the mountain. If you keep the summit in perspective with the rest of the challenge it may help stop you from getting carried away.

Questions 15-21

Do the following statements agree with the information given in the passage?

Write

YES	if the statement agrees with the writer
NO	if the statement does not agree with the writer
NOT GIVEN	if there is no information about this in the passage

(15). The human body does not have unlimited ability to adapt itself to the adverse effects of high altitude.

(16). It is not advisable to switch from lying still in the darkness at night to slog up-hill with the heat of the sun bearing down from above and reflecting up from the snow.

(17). Pay attention to the weather forecast to help decide when to climb the summit.

(18). One should avoid stepping out of the tent at night.

(19). Avalanches are likely to cause more accidents than falls.

(20). High altitudes impact your thought process.

(21). In the final run, one has to push on regardless if one has to reach the summit.

Read the text below and answer Questions 22 - 27

Pros and cons of Working from Home

More and more Americans are working from home, thanks to technological advances that make communication and collaboration over the miles easier. But before you take the plunge into a work-from-home situation, consider the pros and cons of this option...

Working from Home Pros:

{1}. Offers greater flexibility for moms. If you work from home, you are likely to have more control over the hours you work, and can carve out time for doctor's appointments, attending the school party, or dropping off and picking up your kids from school. However, some employers want their work-from-home staff to be available at all times during standard office hours, so make sure you're clear about expectations.

{2}. Cuts out commute time. Some parents sacrifice an hour or more on each end of the work day just getting to and from the office. When working from home, it's like adding another two hours back to your day-time that can be invested in the kids, exercise, or preparing a family meal.

{3}. Every day is a Casual Friday. Working from home cuts out the need for so many work appropriate clothes, and gives you a break on the budget in this area. It's also just nice to be able to spend a rainy work day in your favorite cozy sweater and yoga pants, rather than tromping down the sidewalk to the office in heels.

{4}. Savings on lunch and gas. Unless you're disciplined enough to pack a lunch every day, working away from home will cause you to dine out for lunch pretty frequently. Work-from-home types can just cruise into the kitchen and heat up last night's lasagna, saving major dollars. Ditto for saving on transportation costs from eliminating that commute.

Working from Home Cons:

{1}. Isolation. If you thrive on the social interaction and collaboration that comes with an office environment, working from home might feel isolated and lonely to you.

{2}. Distractions at home. Working from home requires a different level of self-discipline. After all there's no one around to know if you're on task all day, and you have no accountability outside of your own integrity. If you work for an employer, you have to find a way to create a work environment at home that keeps you focused and putting in the hours each day that you'd devote to your job in the office. If you're self-employed, you still need boundaries to make sure that things get done, or your productivity-and income-will suffer.

{3}. Cost of setting up a home office. To work from home, you'll have to make an initial investment in basic equipment for production and communication with your employer and/or clients. A computer, printer, fast internet service, and conferencing accessibility are important to making yourself efficient and available.

{4}. Corporate disconnect. Remember the water cooler, where you learned about that coveted positions that were opening up in your department, or those lay-offs were coming and you'd better be on your toes? Working from home cuts you off from some of this type of important info. You'll have to be more proactive about networking and staying in the loop with your co-workers and bosses.

{5}. Keeping work and family separate. When you're working at home, you have to be careful that your work doesn't spill into family time. Just because you can work from home doesn't mean you should be available 24/7. When you're off-duty, be sure you switch your focus to family.

Questions 22-27

*Fill in the blanks below by choosing **not more than two words** from the text.*

(22). You should have no doubts about the.....of your employer as regards your hours of work.

(23). The time spent on travelling to your workplace and back is no longer required, so this saved time can be in different ways.

(24). When you work from home, you can dress any which way you want; you do not need to stock..... clothes.

(25). Since you do not have co-workers around, there is a sense of when you work from home.

(26). There are many at home, so you need to impose some self-discipline.

(27). When you work from home, there is a from information about what is going on in the company you work for, which means you are not up-to-date with all the details of what is happening at your work-place.

SECTION 3

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

You should spend about 20 minutes on Questions 28-40, which are based on reading passage 3 below.

Why Risks Can Go Wrong: Human intuition is a bad guide to handling risk

{A} People make terrible decisions about the future. The evidence is all around, from their investments in the stock markets to the way they run their businesses. In fact, people are consistently bad at dealing with uncertainty, underestimating some kinds of risk and overestimating others. Surely there must be a better way than using intuition?

{B} In the 1960s a young American research psychologist, Daniel Kahneman, became interested in people's inability to make logical decisions. That launched him on a career to show just how irrationally people behave in practice. When Kahneman and his colleagues first started work, the idea of applying psychological insights to economics and business decisions was seen as rather bizarre. But in the past decade the fields of behavioural finance and behavioural economics have blossomed, and in 2002 Kahneman shared a Nobel prize in economics for his work. Today he is in demand by business organizations and international banking companies. But, he says, there are plenty of institutions that still fail to understand the roots of their poor decisions. He claims that, far from being random, these mistakes are systematic and predictable.

{C} One common cause of problems in decision-making is over-optimism. Ask most people about the future, and they will see too much blue sky ahead, even if past experience suggests

otherwise. Surveys have shown that people's forecasts of future stock market movements are far more optimistic than past long-term returns would justify. The same goes for their hopes of ever-rising prices for their homes or doing well in games of chance. Such optimism can be useful for managers or sportsmen, and sometimes turns into a self-fulfilling prophecy. But most of the time it results in wasted effort and dashed hopes. Kahneman's work points to three types of overconfidence. First, people tend to exaggerate their own skill and prowess; in polls, far fewer than half the respondents admit to having below-average skills in, say, driving. Second, they overestimate the amount of control they have over the future, forgetting about luck and chalking up success solely to skill. And third, in competitive pursuits such as dealing on shares, they forget that they have to judge their skills against those of the competition.

{D} Another source of wrong decisions is related to the decisive effect of the initial meeting, particularly in negotiations over money. This is referred to as the 'anchor effect'. Once a figure has been mentioned, it takes a strange hold over the human mind. The asking price quoted in a house sale, for example, tends to become accepted by all parties as the 'anchor around which negotiations take place. Much the same goes for salary negotiations or mergers and acquisitions. If nobody has much information to go on, a figure can provide comfort - even though it may lead to a terrible mistake.

{E} In addition, mistakes may arise due to stubbornness. No one likes to abandon a cherished belief, and the earlier a decision has been taken, the harder it is to abandon it. Drug companies must decide early to cancel a failing research project to avoid wasting money, but may find it difficult to admit they have made a mistake. In the same way, analysts may have become wedded early to a single explanation that coloured their perception. A fresh eye always helps.

{F} People also tend to put a lot of emphasis on things they have seen and experienced themselves, which may not be the best guide to decision-making. For example, somebody may buy an overvalued share because a relative has made thousands on it, only to get his fingers burned. In finance, too much emphasis on information close at hand helps to explain the tendency by most investors to invest only within the country they live in. Even though they know that diversification is good for their portfolio, a large majority of both Americans and Europeans invest far too heavily in the shares of their home countries. They would be much better off spreading their risks more widely.

{G} More information is helpful in making any decision but, says Kahneman, people spend proportionally too much time on small decisions and not enough on big ones. They need to adjust the balance. During the boom years, some companies put as much effort into planning their office party as into considering strategic mergers.

{H} Finally, crying over spilled milk is not just a waste of time; it also often colours people's perceptions of the future. Some stock market investors trade far too frequently because they are chasing the returns on shares they wish they had bought earlier.

{I} Kahneman reckons that some types of businesses are much better than others at dealing with risk. Pharmaceutical companies, which are accustomed to many failures and a few big successes in their drug-discovery programmes, are fairly rational about their risk-taking. But

banks, he says, have a long way to go. They may take big risks on a few huge loans, but are extremely cautious about their much more numerous loans to small businesses, many of which may be less risky than the big ones. And the research has implications for governments too. They face a whole range of sometimes conflicting political pressures, which means they are even more likely to take irrational decisions.

Questions 28-33

Reading Passage 3 has nine paragraphs A-I.

Choose the correct heading for Paragraphs B and D-H from the list of headings below.

Write the correct number (i-xi) in boxes 1-6 on your answer sheet.

List of headings

- (I) Not identifying the correct priorities
- (II) A solution for the long term
- (III) The difficulty of changing your mind
- (IV) Why looking back is unhelpful
- (V) Strengthening inner resources
- (VI) A successful approach to the study of decision-making
- (VII) The danger of trusting a global market
- (VIII) Reluctance to go beyond the familiar
- (IX) The power of the first number
- (X) The need for more effective risk assessment
- (XI) Underestimating the difficulties ahead

Example	Answer
Paragraph A	X
Paragraph C	XI

(28) Paragraph B

(29) Paragraph D

(30) Paragraph E

(31) Paragraph F

(32) Paragraph G

(33) Paragraph H

Questions 34-37

Choose the correct answer A, B, C or D. Write your answers in boxes 34-37 on your answer sheet.

Question 34 People initially found Kahneman's work unusual because he

- (A) saw mistakes as following predictable patterns.
- (B) was unaware of behavioural approaches.
- (C) dealt with irrational types of practice.
- (D) applied psychology to finance and economics.

Question 35 The writer mentions house-owners attitudes towards the value of their homes to illustrate that

- (A) past failures may destroy an optimistic attitude.
- (B) people tend to exaggerate their chances of success.
- (C) optimism may be justified in certain circumstances.
- (D) people are influenced by the success of others.

Question 36 Stubbornness and inflexibility can cause problems when people

- (A) think their financial difficulties are just due to bad luck.
- (B) avoid seeking advice from experts and analysts.
- (C) refuses to invest in the early stages of a project.
- (D) are unwilling to give up unsuccessful activities or beliefs.

Question 37 Why do many Americans and Europeans fail to spread their financial risks when investing?

- (A) They feel safer dealing in a context which is close to home.
- (B) They do not understand the benefits of diversification.
- (C) They are over-influenced by the successes of their relatives.
- (D) They do not have sufficient knowledge of one another's countries.

Questions 38-40

Answer the questions below, using **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes 38-40 on your answer sheet.

- (38) Which two occupations may benefit from being over-optimistic?
- (39) Which practical skill are many people over-confident about?
- (40) Which type of business has a generally good attitude to dealing with uncertainty?

