

IELTSFEVER ACADEMIC READING TEST 75

You should spend about 20 minutes on **Questions 1–13**, which is based on Reading Passage 1 on pages 1 and 2.

The end of email?

More than 107 trillion emails are sent every year but its grip on your lives is loosening...

- A** For several years students of the internet have noticed that young people are abandoning email in favour of alternative electronic ways of staying in touch. A leading US internet research firm, ComScore, recently reported a 59% decline in the use of internet-based email services by 12 to 17 year-olds, an 18% decline among 25 to 35 year-olds, and an 8% fall among 35 to 44 year-olds. There are even signs that email is beginning to lose favour in the workplace too.
- B** Europe's largest IT company, Atos Origin, intends to scrap internal emails altogether. Its staff will still use email to correspond with clients and other businesses but to talk among themselves they will adopt a variety of newer services such as instant messaging services and older methods – namely talking face to face. The company's chairman prompted headlines around the world when he mentioned he had not sent an email in more than three years. But in fact a number of companies have been quietly moving away from using email as the primary way of communicating within the company. Intel, for example, has been experimenting with 'no-email Fridays' encouraging its engineers to solve problems by phone or face to face instead.
- C** The move, in part reflects the preferences of its workers, many of whom are under the age of 30. However, it is also happening because the volume of email is becoming unsustainable. Employees who usually get 200 emails a day, spend between five and 20 hours a week just clearing their inboxes. The distraction and time-wasting of email have been a regular part of office life for more than a decade. More than 107 trillion are now sent each year, of which half are spam. The rest are a mix of round robins, personal messages and badly written memos that pile up in archives and do little to boost productivity. Research shows that it takes 64 seconds to regain concentration after reading an email and when you consider that US office workers have been measured checking their emails and swapping windows on their computer screens an average of 37 times an hour, that adds up to major distraction.
- D** Employees will be expected to use collaboration and social media tools instead of email to communicate with co-workers. In English, that means newer types of electronic messaging services. One such service is instant messaging. Devised in the 1990s by people playing games on the net, instant messaging or IM is much simpler and more responsive than email. IM users can see when colleagues are online and then communicate in small, continuous trails of dialogues on their screens, much more like a phone call. These messages tend to be deleted as they go, thus avoiding clogged up email inboxes and archives. Less formal than email, they are also a far more efficient way of, for example, trying to arrange a meeting. IM or 'chat' facilities often form part of larger social networks, such as Facebook and Twitter.

- E** The immediacy of these synchronous messaging systems enable people to stay in touch and broadcast information to each other – their location, activities, plans and daily schedules – without the need for constant emailing. ‘Status updates’ in which users post a simple message that can be read by all their contacts, enable people to see and share information that might not be worth an email but can be useful nonetheless. All such ‘easy chat’ services were born of an engagement with the internet that just didn’t exist when email overtook the world of communication in the early 1990s.
- F** Until about a decade ago, most neuroscientists thought the brain stopped developing after childhood. But the constant distraction and torrent of information that we subject ourselves to – via email, surfing the web, TV, multi-tasking – is now thought to alter the way we think. The new technology is, in effect, rewiring our brains. Scientists have drawn parallels between the use of electronic communication and addiction to food stimulants that release small amounts of dopamine in the brain. We feel a buzz of excitement when a message arrives, which then fades, leaving us feeling flat and bored until the next one comes. But whether this makes us less productive is open to question. Research has found that people work better in bursts of concentration interrupted by breaks – even for pointless emails – than long sustained spells.
- G** There is still an estimated three billion email accounts in the world, a figure that dwarfs any other form of communication. Email also retains several distinguishing qualities. Unlike the galaxy of social networks and IM services on the internet – all requiring different accounts and often their own software – email systems are all fundamentally compatible. It doesn’t matter which programme you send it from. And even its annoyances contain advantages: email archives have proved to be hugely valuable, and because it is an asynchronous medium (the recipients choose when to open their messages) this means we can try and preserve some control over our time. This is not the end of email – it will remain a bedrock of businesses for some time to come. It’s simply the end of its monopoly.

Questions 1–6

The reading passage has seven paragraphs labelled **A–G**.

Which paragraph contains the following information?

Write the correct letter **A–G** in boxes 1–6 on your answer sheet.

NB You may use any letter more than once.

- 1 reasons for the appeal of social networking tools over email
- 2 a description of alternatives to email as a form of communication in the workplace
- 3 a reference to why one business plans to reduce its flow of internal email
- 4 a brief conclusion of findings on the effects technology has on our attention span
- 5 evidence of a decline in the popularity of email
- 6 a reference to some positive features of email as a form of communication

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Questions 7–10

Write your answers in boxes 7–10 of your answer sheet.

List **FOUR** examples of information that can be communicated using the medium of Instant Messaging.

- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

Questions 11–13

Complete the sentences below with words taken from the reading passage.

Use **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes 11–13 of your answer sheet.

- 11 Young people use social networking tools that provide the level of they want.
- 12 The advantage of social networking is that it puts people in control of the they see.
- 13 Email is an, so you don't know if someone has read your message.

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You should spend about 20 minutes on **Questions 14–26**, which is based on Reading Passage 2 on pages 5 and 6.

Colour on the Brain

A scientific study reveals the different effects that colours have on the brain.

- A** Paint your room red if you want attention to detail and paint it blue to prompt creative thinking. This is the conclusion of a study into how colour is likely to affect the human mind. Scientists who monitored the performance of more than 600 people as they underwent a series of psychological tests found that red stimulated a person's attentiveness whereas blue stimulated the imagination and inspired more of a risk-taking attitude.
- B** The researchers found that the volunteers were unaware of the effect that colour had on their thinking and suggest that the findings could be used for anything from choosing the interior decoration of a school or university to the marketing of products and services. Previous research produced contradictory conclusions in terms of the benefit or otherwise of exposing people to a background colour of red or blue while asking them to carry out a thinking task, according to Juliet Zhu of the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, who carried out the study published in the journal *Science*. 'Prior research found conflicting results in terms of which colour – red or blue – leads to
- better performance', said Dr Zhu. 'We show that if the task requires detailed attention, red will help more, but if the task is creative in nature, blue will be more beneficial. It really depends on the nature of the task'.
- C** Humans, like other primates, have trichromatic, three colour vision, which evolutionists believe came about as a result of the need to distinguish easily between ripe and unripe fruit in a forest. But the influence of red and blue on our modern way of thinking is probably a learnt behaviour rather than being innate, Dr Zhu said. We think the difference between red and blue is due to learnt associations, she said. That's why I expect that if in another culture red is often associated with other meanings, we might not be able to replicate the results of this study. Thanks to stop signs, emergency vehicles and teacher's red pens, we associate red with danger, mistakes and caution. The avoidance motivation, or heightened state, that red activates makes us vigilant and so helps us to perform tasks where careful attention is required to produce a right or wrong answer.

- D** Blue meanwhile, is associated with a clear sky or an open ocean, and as such it is the colour that encourages us to think ‘outside the box’ and to be creative. It is also the colour of calmness and tranquillity. Dr Zhu explained, ‘Through associations with the sky, the ocean and water, most people associate blue with openness, peace and tranquillity. The benign cues make people feel safe without being creative and exploratory – not surprisingly, it is people’s favourite colour. Six different psychological tests were carried out on the volunteers. One involved a memory task; recalling 36 words within a two-minute period. People did better when the background colour on the computer screen was red, whereas blue led to more false recalls. Another challenged people to think of as many different uses for a pile of bricks as they could. Red or blue did not affect the total number of ideas, but blue did result in a significantly higher score in terms of the creative content of the idea.
- E** Several of the tests investigated how colour affects a person’s attitude to an advertising campaign. A red background stimulated a person’s attention to the detailed technological capabilities of a camera, whereas a blue background was more likely to stimulate ideas about what the camera could be used for. Similarly, an advertisement for a fictional brand of toothpaste was found to have a greater impact for a negative message, such as ‘cavity prevention,’ if red was used as the background colour. But blue had a greater impact for a positive message, such as ‘tooth whitening’. Dr Zhu said that the background colour used in advertisements could have subtly different effects on a potential consumer. When the background colour of ads was red, people formed more favourable evaluations of products featuring specific product details as opposed to evocative or creative messaging.
- F** However, blue produced the opposite effect. Dr Zhu said, ‘If we are setting up educational facilities that intend to enhance performance on detail-oriented tasks, such as memory and proofreading, or if we want people to remember important side-effects of medications, then the colour red should be more appropriate. However, if we want to set up a brain-storming session for a new product-development process or coming up with innovative ideas, then go with blue’. ‘Blue if you want to be creative, red if you want to be diligent’.

Questions 14–21

Complete the summary using the list of words, A–L, below.

Write the correct letter, A–L in boxes 14–21 on your answer sheet.

A recent study has found that the colour red can encourage people to produce **14** work and blue can make people **15** to take risks. Researchers conducted tests on volunteers to find out whether cognitive performance **16** when people saw red or blue. The volunteers performed a series of tasks with words or images displayed against red or blue backgrounds on computer screens. Red groups were **17** in tests of memory. They performed **18** on tests which required more creative responses, such as inventing different uses for a pile of bricks. Blue groups produced **19** ideas. The study also tested responses to advertising and found that advertisements which listed product details were **20** with the volunteers when displayed on red backgrounds. Advertisements which used imaginative designs were **21** than those displayed on blue backgrounds.

- A more successful
- B more detailed
- C less well
- D actually
- E increased
- F more effective
- G more appropriate
- H more popular
- I varied
- J more likely
- K more original
- L less appealing

Questions 22–26

Classify the following statements as referring to

- A red
- B blue

Write the correct letter **A** or **B** in boxes 22–26 on your answer sheet.

- 22 It may help people recall information more easily.
- 23 It may encourage people to experiment with ideas.
- 24 It may enable people to avoid dangerous situations.
- 25 It may make people less wary about taking risks.
- 26 It may enable people to concentrate more easily.

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You should spend about 20 minutes on Questions 27–40, which is based on Reading Passage 3 on pages 9 and 10.

The Strange Sad Fate of the honey Bee

The world is losing the honey bee at an alarming rate – a trend that could have implications for us all...

- A** Thousands of American beehives were recently found to be almost empty and devoid of bees. They were thought to be victims of a malady called Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD). The problem has not been limited to America. Over the past few years, large numbers of colonies have been wiped out in Canada, South America, Asia and Europe.
- B** The malady occurs when most of the bees suddenly disappear from the hive leaving it with only queens, eggs or pupae ('the brood') and a few immature workers still remaining. The vanished bees – strangely never found – are thought to die singly far from home. The phenomenon is odd for various reasons. Firstly, bees never usually abandon a hive until the brood has hatched; their sophisticated in-built navigation system allows them to forage up to three miles from the hive and return safely. Secondly, when a colony dies, the honey left behind is usually raided by bees from other hives, yet these bees avoid the hives completely. And lastly, the incidence of the malady is very erratic. Some beekeepers report heavy losses while their neighbours maintain healthy hives.
- C** If honey bee populations continue to decline, it will, of course hit honey supplies. But far more disturbing is the effect it could have on flora. Most flowers rely on animals to pollinate them, and the honey bee is nature's premier pollinator, with a body perfectly designed to collect and spread pollen and a work ethic to match: one big colony containing up to 60,000 worker bees, can pollinate millions of flowers in a day. In a spiral of decline, as bee numbers drop, the remaining islands of wild flowers may not be pollinated and some could simply die out. Especially at risk are rare varieties and the insect and animal species that depend on them.
- D** Scientists remain puzzled by the decline in bee populations. However, they believe that there has been widespread damage to the bees' immune system. In America, bees are hauled around the country to pollinate crops. Their environment is altered to keep them working, by moving them to warmer spots in winter so that the queen keeps laying and producing more workers. One theory is that the bees' immune systems get damaged in the process. Another sees the cause in the disruptive effects of climate change, while others again trace it to one of two well-known bee diseases. When honey bees are kept as a business (for honey production or hired out to fruit farmers as pollinators) their colonies are kept close together. This allows disease to spread easily despite them being treated with antibiotics to keep them producing. In stressed conditions bees may more easily fall victim to viruses that normally would do them little harm. More fancifully, some even blame mobile phones, which are said to interfere with bees' navigation systems. The impact of all such factors (except the last) is exacerbated by the shrinking size of the gene pool – most beekeepers having filled their apiaries with just one type of bee from Italy, renowned for its honey and gentleness.
- E** Bees have also suffered from pesticides sprayed on crops and in open spaces such as parks. The pesticides attack the nervous system and disorientate them, interfering with the bees, vital communication skills – in particular the 'waggle dance' they use to tell other workers where nectar and pollen can be found. One such pesticide was banned in France following heavy winter bee deaths.

- F** The first recorded case of disappearing bees was in America 150 years ago, and, ever since, large numbers have vanished at regular intervals throughout North America, Europe and Australia. These losses have been given many different names: disappearing disease, spring dwindle, May disease or autumn collapse. In America, there were 5.9 million maintained colonies in 1947; today there are only 2.44 million. If bees keep disappearing at this rate, it is estimated that there will be none left in America by 2035.
- G** 'If the bee disappeared off the surface of the globe' the mathematician Albert Einstein is reputed to have said, 'then man would only have four years of life left'. This may be an exaggeration but scientists believe that if the honey bee did disappear, farming as we know it would collapse. More than 90 commercial crops – from apples, peaches and citrus fruits to strawberries and blackberries, to nuts, carrots, broccoli and onions – are pollinated by bees. So is cotton and much livestock fodder, such as clover. A study by Cornell University found that bees helped produce around 60 billion dollars worth of food around the world – fifteen billion dollars in the US alone, where many commercial beekeepers take their hives on a five month tour of the country, pollinating California's lucrative almond trees, for instance, then Florida's citrus trees and Maine's blueberries. Without bees, wind-pollinated grasses would continue to grow, but flowers and vegetable beds would be devastated, and there would be far less food for birds and mammals to eat. It has been calculated that the 'service' that bees provide is essential for the production of one in three of our mouthfuls of food. In southern Sichuan in China, where honey bees have been wiped out, pear trees have to be pollinated by hand – an extremely labour intensive business.

Questions 27–33

The reading passage has seven paragraphs, **A–G**.

Which paragraph contains the following information?

Write the correct letter **A–G** in boxes 27–33 on your answer sheet.

NB You may use any letter more than once.

- 27 the contribution bees make to the survival of less common plant species
- 28 one unlikely explanation for the decline in bee numbers
- 29 a definition of the killer condition affecting bees
- 30 one example of an alternative way to pollinate crops
- 31 the damaging effects of chemicals on bees
- 32 several names previously used to refer to the fall in bee population
- 33 some puzzling features of Colony Collapse Disorder

Questions 34–36

Complete the sentence with **ONE WORD AND/OR A NUMBER** from the reading passage for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes 34–36 on your answer sheet.

- 34 There may be a link between the ability of bees to return to their hives and exposure to frequencies from
- 35 Many crops including fruit and vegetables rely on bees and these include food such as which cows eat.
- 36 In total, bees contribute approximately \$..... to global food production.

Questions 37–40

Which **FOUR** factors linked to the decrease in bee numbers are mentioned in the text?

Choose **FOUR** letters **A–G** and write them in boxes 37–40 on your answer sheet.

- A** climate change
- B** genetically modified crops
- C** hive invasion by insects
- D** lack of genetic biodiversity
- E** malnutrition
- F** migratory beekeeping
- G** pesticides